

THE INFLUENCE OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL CHANGES  
ON THE MAGICO-RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS AND  
ORGANIZATION OF THE SOUTHERN EWE-SPEAKING  
PEOPLE OF GHANA

BY  
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In the academic field, my entire gratitude goes to Dr. K.L. Little, my supervisor. I studied field methods under him, and I believe I also profited immensely by his patient guidance "in the field" and good advice in the writing-up.

Finally, I must acknowledge my own father's faith in education which has made possible my ambitions for advanced training in Anthropology. To him, education is the gateway to the New (renascent) Africa. It is this faith which has sustained him to give his son a generous, liberal education.

D. K. Fiawoo.

University of Edinburgh  
February 1959.

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

(1)

Aims and Objectives

Materials for the present thesis were gathered in the course of field research in the Anlo District of South-eastern Ghana, between March 1956 and December 1957. The main objective was to investigate and describe the influence of Western European culture on the magico-religious concepts and organization of an unindustrialised West African community. In pursuance of this objective, it was necessary to indicate the degree of success or failure in the assimilation of European factors of change. Relative values of the institutions concerned on both sides were not thought relevant to the study. What was considered of fundamental value was an indication of the manner in which traditional cults served the needs of the community concerned and how far a changed situation, resulting from a money economy, a new political system, Christianity and education, contributed to modification or alteration of the traditional picture. If the traditional religious system was modified or altered, this would imply adaptation of old cults in new shape, to essentially new cults or to new religious systems. Framed as specific enquiries, the main questions being asked from one stage to another are:

(i) How did the traditional cults serve the social needs of the Anloawo?

(ii) To what extent does the introduction of a money economy, a new political system, Christianity and education lead to a changed situation?



(iii) What forms of religious adaptation are the by-products of this new situation?

In accordance with these objectives, the thesis has been divided into three parts: (a) Traditional Background; (b) Transition; (c) The Contemporary Scene. The first part examines the interrelationship of the traditional religion and social structure, and how cult groups are designed to the need-satisfaction of members. It is the study of religion in terms of social reality.

The second part deals largely with the nature of the European impact. The introduction of money as involving a medium of exchange, a method of buying services and its relation to the traditional life and belief, is examined. Similarly, the role of the other impinging forces - Christianity, education, new administration - in relation to the traditional culture is analysed. This part of the study lays the ground for the next section.

In the contemporary scene, the effects of contact, as they manifest themselves in various forms of religious adaptation, are described. Adaptation or reintegration is at two levels: (a) traditional religious adaptation; (b) Christian church adaptation. In both forms of adaptation, almost equal emphasis is given to both cultural and social factors in the adaptive process.

It is evident from the above statement of aims and objectives that the present study does not intend to make theoretical contributions to the origins of religion; nor does it intend to compare on ethical grounds the different religious systems involved in our study. It rather seeks by inductive analysis of observed facts in a culturally homogenous area in West Africa to

make some contribution to the existing knowledge of "social change". This leads us to methodology.

(2)

Methodology

As already indicated, this study has been based on field research extending over a year and a half.

The Anlo District embraces a fairly large sector of Eweland in the south-eastern section of Ghana. Following the sociological technique in such circumstances, I concentrated on a relatively small community from where I made periodic visits to areas further afield for purposes of comparison and for obtaining a comprehensive view of my total field.

I settled at Dzelukofe, but actually concentrated on this village as well as Keta, two to three miles to the east, and Anloga, twelve miles to the west. The bulk of my material was gathered from these sources. The nearness of these towns one to the other, their historical associations and their present-day administrative and traditional religious importance, make them collectively suitable for studies in social or religious change. Keta is the district administrative headquarters and represents the height of urban development in this area (Anlo district). Anloga as the capital maintains its traditional role as the archive of traditional lore and the centre of religious practice. The national public cults are located here; so are the clan shrines and compounds. It is also the seat of the Paramount Chief. Dzelukofe has a unique position for the anthropologist. Only two to three miles away from Keta, it has some of the urban features



of this town, and is sometimes regarded as its outlying fringe; but Dzelukofe is also the Yewe stronghold and has many pagan features.

After making a fair headway in research in these three towns, I began to pay visits to towns and villages in the rural districts inland, and across the Keta lagoon. Inland, I visited such places as Agbozome, Penyi, Dzodze, Ave-Biadenyigba, Tadzevu, Abor, Anyako. Across the lagoon, Kodzi, Atito and Alakple were the main villages. On the littoral, Aflao on the eastern border and Wuti-Srogboe in the west were included in my itinerary.

As to the specific techniques applied in the collection of data, the nature of my study necessitated the application of nearly all the socio-anthropological techniques, especially as I studied them prior to my field work. These included interviewing, questionnaire involving poll-type and open-end questions, the study of available documents, case studies, and above all, my own personal observation (largely non-participant). I also kept a personal diary of daily events between Dzelukofe and Keta.

Most of the data involving the traditional background were largely acquired by the interview of illiterate informants, supplemented by my own personal observation. As indicated in the actual text, money economy (in Anlo) and the other European elements have not radically altered the traditional religious institutions. Traditional ritual, with very little change, may still be observed at Anloga and hinterland villages. It has, therefore, been possible, in large measure, to supplement and to verify informants' views by direct personal observation of ritual. Consequently, the first part of this thesis does not set out to provide what one would con-

sider a "reconstruction". In the instances in which important cults have been proscribed by government ordinance or the action of Government Agents, the gaps have been filled by interview of former members of the cult and well-informed members of the community.

In the matter of co-operation from my illiterate friends, excepting that "pourboire" increasingly became an important feature of rapport, there was, on the whole, very little or no difficulty. My illiterate informants were informed that I was collecting information on "traditional customs" for the benefit of High School Students who required more expert knowledge of traditional ways of life (my associations with a secondary school at this time proved to be an obvious advantage). I tried, as far as possible, to avoid any direct references to a thesis or a book, as I felt this might interfere with the accuracy of my data. I succeeded very well in this camouflage until towards the end of my study when news began to leak out that I was returning to Europe "to do further studies". Fortunately, I was at this stage merely engaged in verifying data already collected and filling in gaps, and I do not believe that correct information of my intentions produced any adverse effect.

In the matter of co-operation and accuracy of data, there were also persons who were genuinely concerned that I should obtain a fair and accurate picture. In this connection, mention must be made of a couple of chiefs at Anloga, the traditional capital, a boko (diviner) and an elder who periodically assembled at Anloga so I might have the opportunity of examining them on aspects of Anlo culture. All four were acknowledged experts. Such meetings were highly fruitful, although I did not allow them to exert undue



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influence on my collections, without first checking or verifying from other sources.

In connection with the interview technique, it must be borne in mind that the writer himself is an Anlo by birth; besides the advantage of language, this must have contributed to the establishment of good relations, so necessary for scientifically fruitful and reliable interviewing.

In dealing with the nature of contact as recorded in the transition period, I relied a great deal on documentary material, especially in supplying the historical background to the discussion of the factors of change. Documentary material was usually supplemented by interviewing and or questionnaire. A questionnaire was submitted to the heads of churches and answers obtained by interview and discussion.<sup>(1)</sup> The response of the churches was immediate, although some were clearly embarrassed by my demands for statistical information. Statistical information on schools was compiled from the latest pay-vouchers in the District Education Office at Keta. Information not locally available was obtained from the Ministry of Education at Accra. I applied to the Government Agent's office at Keta for relevant ordinances, old colonial reports and other government publications. I had free and frank exchanges of views with some of the well-informed elite and interviewed a number of senior civil servants including the Agricultural Officer at Abor, the Mass Education and Social Welfare Officer at Keta, the Medical Officer at Dzelukofe.

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1. Only Rev. Father Beckers of the Roman Catholic Church at Dzelukofe supplied written answers which were later followed up by discussions.

On the contemporary scene, I relied increasingly on my own personal observation and general assessment of the situation, supplemented by other media of research. The information on the Atike Cults was obtained by interview and observation. The final chapter dealing with the associational aspects of the church was largely by questionnaire and my own personal observation. Aside from informal discussions with students from the two secondary schools at Keta-Dzelukofe, one school was presented with an elaborate questionnaire. There was also an essay competition on aspects of traditional religious belief and practice for which prizes were awarded. The object was to ascertain the depth of knowledge of indigenous religious beliefs and the extent of participation in communal ritual.

As to my own personal attitude to the different religious systems discussed, I did not believe that I was influenced one way or the other. Though a Christian by faith, I approached my field as objectively as possible.

### (3)

#### The Anthropological Literature on Anlo

A scientific study must take into account existing knowledge. In this connection it is regrettable that the anthropological literature on Anlo or the wider linguistic group, the Ewe-speaking people as a whole, is most scanty. The only published English scientific (anthropological) work that embodies the area under study is a book of 63 pages - The Ewe-Speaking People of Togoland and the Gold Coast, an ethnographic survey by Madeline Manoukian, based almost entirely on Barbara Ward's M.A.

(London) unpublished thesis on Ewe Social Organisation. The latter, in turn, is largely based on German publications of the early twentieth century by Rev. Spieth and Professor Westermann. Thus, before Barbara Ward's thesis, Eweland was hardly known to British Anthropologists, even though the affairs of the one million and odd people involved were being discussed in United Nations circles.

Spieth's Die Religion der Eweer in Sud Togo is by modern standards, quite scientific. Nevertheless, it is not entirely satisfactory from the standpoint of the modern anthropologist. The major portion of his work is devoted to a cataloguing of the countless "public" and "private" cults, without attention to membership or the sociological aspects of the cult.<sup>(1)</sup> In delineating details of ritual, he is extremely accurate, as my own investigations bear out; but he is wholly dogma-immersed. Of course, his work was published in 1911, long before the birth of African Sociology. Spieth's earlier publication, Die Ewe-Stamme is much less relevant to our purpose. Aside from devoting by far the greater part of his work to Ho where he lived and worked as a missionary for about ten years, it suffers from the same lack of sociological data as the 1911 publication.

Professor Westermann's anthropological interest in this area is largely in the field of linguistics wherein he has made valuable contributions to Ewe studies. Though a foreigner, he was about the leading authority on Ewe language. But beyond linguistics, he has also made a definite contribution to studies in Ewe culture.

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1. Spieth classifies trowo according to their physical forms: e.g. those representing parts of the earth (including rocks and mountains), animals, heavenly bodies, springs and rivers, trees, woods and fruits, etc.



This is amply reflected in his The African Today and Tomorrow, where he draws repeatedly on Ewe culture. His Die Glidyi Ewe in Togo is a more specific treatment of Ewe culture. But like Spieth's Die Ewe Stamme, it is devoted almost entirely to a small section of Eweland, "Glidyi", the modern Genyi; material for the book was acquired from a single Glidyi informant in Berlin - Bonifatius Foli.

One important value of these German works is the incorporation of lengthy Ewe texts with parallel German translations. These help to bring out the Ewe ideas most accurately.

In discussing the available scientific literature, mention must be made of Sir A.B. Ellis' 19th century publication, Ewe-Speaking People, 1890. This work, based on contemporary travel literature, remained for a long time the sole English work on the Ewe-speaking people. But it has been so roundly condemned that it would seem hardly deserving of mention as an anthropological contribution. Herskovits condemns it as containing "nothing new". Spieth refers to it as of "little value", while D.A. Chapman, himself an Ewe and a former Geography master at Achimota College, describes it as "useless". (See Bibliography of Barbara Ward's thesis).

Finally, Dr. Parrinder, who has been most active in religious studies in West Africa, must be cited. His West African Religion is based on a comparative study of the Yoruba, "Ewe" and Akan. But it must be pointed out that when Parrinder speaks of the "Ewe", he has mostly in mind the Fon of Dahomey. It is from the general comparative standpoint that his work is of scientific value to our study of the Anlo. Other works by the same author are cited for purposes of comparison.

(4)

Concept of "Social Change"

It has not been found necessary to discuss in a separate context existing theories of "social change" or "culture contact" which perhaps influence the course of the present study. They are best discussed in context. At this stage, it will be necessary barely to define our concept of "change" and related ideas.

"Culture Contact" has, in the past, been used to apply to "acculturation", the social mechanism involved in a certain type of diffusion. More specifically, it applies to changed conditions in a non-literate society, resulting from the impact of European institutions. There is a tendency nowadays to replace it by the term "social change" or "culture change" and apply it in a wider sense; as for example, the acculturative process within a single society. In more recent times when educated Africans have been serving as acculturative agents in their own communities, or "civilised" Creoles serving as the means of Europeanisation, we have acculturation, but not "culture contact"; it is "social change". The degree of change is less far-reaching. "Social change" in this particular sense compares with the social mechanism involved in American automation finding its way to Britain.<sup>(1)</sup>

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1. For a useful discussion of the whole concept of "social change", especially in relation to the West African field, see Little, "The Study of Social Change in British West Africa", *Africa* Vol.23 (1953); "The Significance of the West African Creole for Africanist and Afro-American Studies", *African Affairs*, Vol.XLIX (1950). See also Piddington, An Introduction to Social Anthropology, Vol.II, Chapter XVII, for a general treatment of the subject.

In their analysis of "Social Change" Dr. Hoernle and Dr. Ellen Hellman comment on distinctions between "Social Change" and "Culture Contact" as follows: "Because the term 'social change' is generally used to describe change within a modern Western culture and the term 'culture contact' to describe the changes due to juxtaposition of two entirely different cultures, it has become common to regard the two processes as different in <sup>k</sup>mind. There appears to us to be no justification for this. 'Culture contact' is one type of 'social change', different not in kind but in degree." (1)

For the purpose of this thesis the emphasis is on "social change" rather than "culture contact". As pre-literate peoples assume responsibility for their own affairs and the European ceases to be the prime acculturative agent, it is to be expected that the emphasis will shift from "culture contact" to "social change". In independent Ghana, for example, while the European probably remains an important acculturative agent in an independent Ghana, responsibility for urbanization and modernisation is more and more devolving upon the Ghanaian African himself.

The implication, for our present purpose, is that a "single society" is developing even in the pre-literate society under the European impact. Distinctions between essentially African and essentially European elements are gradually becoming irrelevant in the contemporary social reality.

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1. "The Analysis of Social Change and its Bearing on Education", Colonial Review, Vol.7, No.8, 1952.

(5)

Abstract of Thesis

The problem set for the thesis is to examine those changes overtaking Anlo indigenous religious institutions as a result of the impinging influence of Western European institutions. The questions being asked from one stage to another are:

- (i) How did the traditional cults serve the social needs of the Anloawo?
- (ii) To what extent does the introduction of money economy, new political system, Christianity and education lead to a changed situation?
- (iii) What forms of religious adaptation are the by-products of this new situation?

In the light of these objectives, the whole study was divided into three parts: a traditional background, a period of transition and the contemporary scene.

Part I examines the interrelationship of religion and the social organization. The main concepts of the polytheistic religion include "animism"<sup>(1)</sup> or a belief in Mawu or a High God, nature spirits or trowo and lineal ancestors or togbenoliwo. There is also "animatism"<sup>(1)</sup> or belief in supernatural power or dynamism, manifesting itself in the manipulation of various charms (dzokawo). These beliefs find expression in various forms of ritual linked to political institutions, economic activities, social structure and the crises of life. Ritual provides a spiritual background to all institutions operating within the society.

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1. This term, as applied here and in the rest of the thesis, is employed for the sake of conciseness. The full religious concepts implied are discussed in context.

Part II leads to the new impinging forces. The nature of these forces and their implications for traditional life and belief are examined. In particular, <sup>the introduction & development of a</sup> money economy in Anlo is found to have <sup>had</sup> a far-reaching effect on the socio-economic structure which in turn undermines the unity of the kin group or the local community for ritual or religious observances.

Readjustments in the indigenous religious system of the contemporary scene indicate that the impinging forces have produced effects of a relatively disorganizing kind. Two main forms of religious adaptation have taken shape: relatively modified traditional cults (i.e. ritual modification) and Christian churches. Lying between these major forms are a variety of non-indigenous African traditional cults making overtures to Christianity. These are the modern atike cults which have proliferated from neighbouring tribal groups.

Touching purely traditional religious groups, new ideas have crept into the traditional cults; ritual is gradually being modified to adapt the cult to modern circumstances. The Yewe secret cult is a typical example. The atike cult is a form of adaptation to modern psycho-social problems. It offers release to victims of witchcraft, a "functional disease" which appears epidemic in circumstances of mass frustration. But it also seeks alignment with Christianity by which it claims to offer its membership prestige in terms of modern social values.

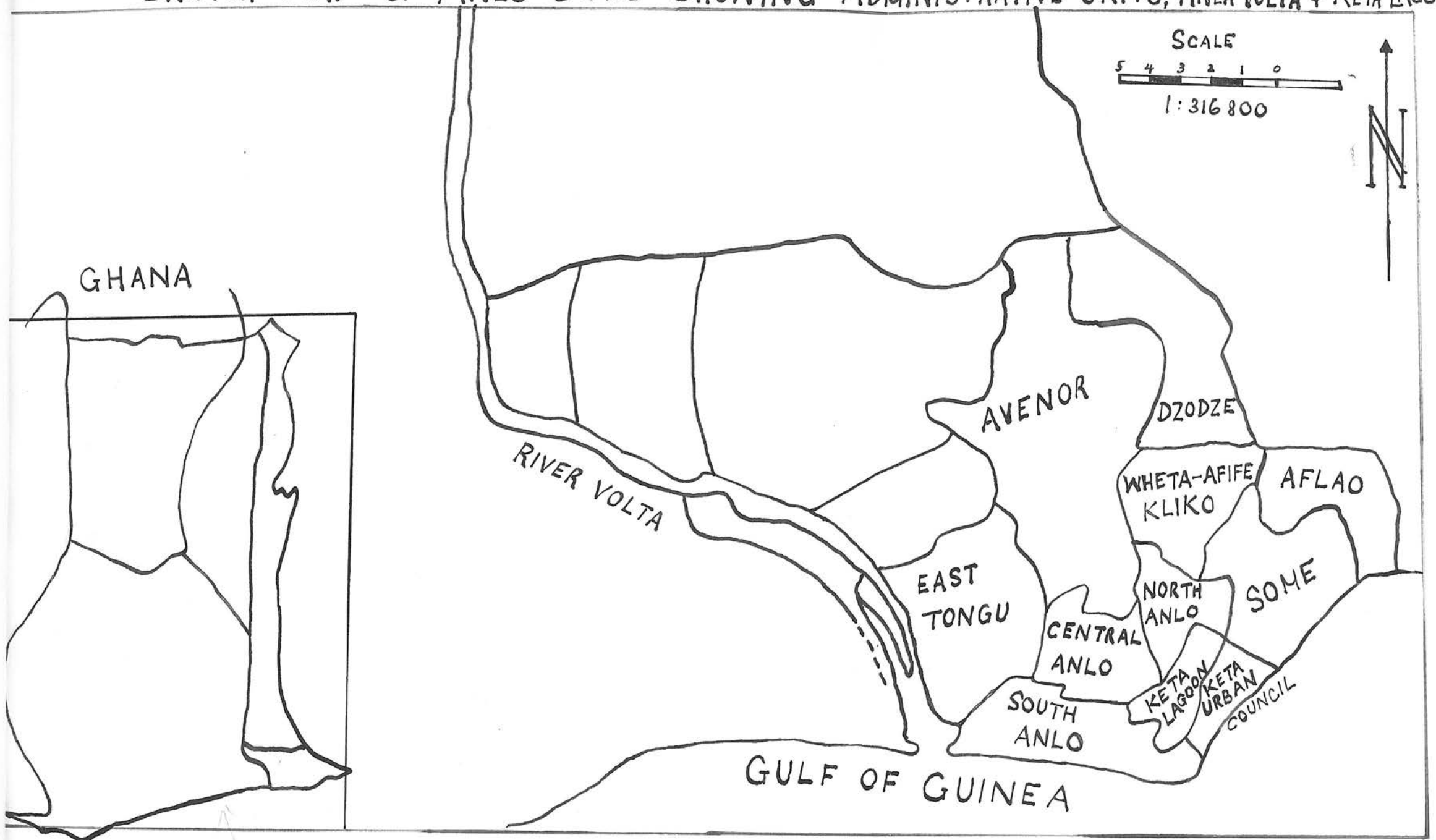
The Christian churches, like the atike cults, are forms of adaptation to modern circumstances. In the independent churches there is some cultural conditioning of the new institutions to the fulfilment of traditional needs. A similar trend is noticeable



in the orthodox churches, though it is resolutely resisted by church authority as an aberration.

One important characteristic feature of modern religious institutions is the development of a type of organization characteristic of the modern voluntary association which seems to be adapted to meeting modern needs by traditional media.

# SKETCH-MAP OF ANLO STATE SHOWING ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS, RIVER VOLTA & KETA LAGOON



## CHAPTER II

### THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Culturally and linguistically, the Anlo State, the area under study, is part of the Ewe-speaking region of the trans-Volta Territory (T.V.T.) of south-east Ghana and southern French Togoland to the east. Eweland as a whole lies between the River Volta (west of Keta) and the River Mono to the east. It stretches northwards from the Gulf of Guinea to the Togo ranges. The basin of the Mono forms a transitional zone between the Ewe-speaking people and their eastern neighbours, the Fon of Dahomey.<sup>(1)</sup> The Volta River on the west does not serve as a neat boundary between the Ewe and other tribes in Ghana; but broadly speaking, the Adangme, the Akwapim and the Ashanti largely lie west of the Volta and are therefore close neighbours of the Ewe with whom many inter-tribal wars were fought as antagonists and as allies. The total area of Eweland, including the areas of other peoples absorbed through intermixture during the last two centuries is about 10,000 sq. miles with a population bordering on one million inhabitants.<sup>(2)</sup>

Since the last world war Eweland has become internationally known; ~~when~~ a number of petitions for the unification of the Ewe people were presented to the United Nations Trusteeship Council in 1947. Since then there has been a number of United Nations Visiting Missions to various parts of Eweland to make

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1. D.A. Chapman, "Human Geography of Eweland" in First International West African Conference (1946), p.79.
  2. Ibid.

on-the-spot investigations or to supervise impartial plebiscites. The latest of such plebiscites was held in French Togoland in the spring of 1958 to determine the future political status of the French Togoland Trust Territory. So much for a bird's eye view of Eweland as a whole. We shall now examine the particular territory under study.

(1)

The Land

The Anlo State lies to the south-western corner of Eweland and forms the south-eastern triangle of Ghana. It is the largest political unit within Eweland. The first Ewe grammar published in 1856 was based on the Anlo dialect; today most of the available Ewe literature is based on this dialect. The state stretches about 50 miles along the littoral, i.e. from Anyanni by the River Volta to Aflao on the Ghana-French Togoland frontier; from the Gulf to the northernmost point is over 40 miles. The whole area is bounded on:

- (a) the West by the Volta river and the administrative boundaries of Central and East Tongu
- (b) the East by the French Togoland Trust Territory
- (c) the South by the Gulf of Guinea
- (d) the North by the administrative boundaries of Adaklu and Anyigbe of Central Trans-Volta Togoland.

D.A. Chapman, the only geographer who has made any specialised geographical study of Eweland broadly divides the area into three regions: (a) The Southern Lowland, (b) the Central Plain, (c) the Northern Upland. The present Anlo district falls within the Southern Lowland and the southern portions of the Central Plain.

The following brief account of topography, climate and vegetation is based on Chapman's paper as read before the First International West African Conference, Ibadan . The main features of the relief include (a) a low, sandy, undulating coastal belt extending from some four hundred yards to two miles or more in the broadest parts; (b) a long depression running almost parallel to the coastal belt, on the landward side; this depression is studded by lagoons and creeks of various shapes and sizes differing in salinity and separated from one another by marshy areas built up of tidal clays, generally peaty in character and often overlain with sand or sandy clay; (c) beyond the lagoons, a central plain (south "Central Plain") rising gradually north-eastwards, undulating here, flat there and interrupted by isolated hills; the plain is underlain by ancient crystalline gneisses and schists intruded by bands of granite and overlain by varying thickness of later deposits. A number of rivers rise in the "northern Uplands" (north Anlo district) or beyond, and traverse the country in a southern direction either to discharge into the Volta or the Mono or to empty themselves into the depression that separates the coastal belt from the "central plain".

The climate of the southern parts is characterized by regular land and sea-breezes. The annual rainfall is low (about 25-30") but both relative humidity (75-88%) and temperature (86°F-92°F by day and 70°F-80°F by night) are high. Further north the rainfall is about 45". Tornado rains begin in late February or early March. The "First Rains" (May-June) culminate in May when there is a period of continuous rainfall. This is the season



of the main rains of the year. After an inter-rainy season of about two months (July to August or early September) the "Second Rains" begin in September or early October and last until about November. The season is also known as the period of the "Small Rains", as the total amount of rainfall for this season averages only about half that received during the "First Rains".

Between November and January dry northerly winds become a marked feature of the weather, when the Harmattan with its haze and clouds of fine dust is experienced, and a feeling of cold is induced by the rapid evaporation of moisture from the skin.

The natural vegetation of the seaboard consists of grasses and low bushes. The infertile soil supports extensive groves of coconut palms from which copra and coconut oil are made. Fairly good crops of cassava and a small amount of maize are produced in the moisture-retaining sandy soil.

Along the shores of the lagoons, the natural vegetation consists of coarse grasses mainly, and in places, sedges and reeds are found. Mangroves are found near the river mouths. Intensive farming is carried on along the shores of the lagoons especially where the surface soil is rich organically. Farm products include cassava, okro and a small amount of maize. In the marshy areas, sugarcane is grown and isolated stands of banana and oil palms are also found. Along the shores of the Keta Lagoon intensive and efficient shallot (onion) farming is made possible by the remarkable energy of the native farmers. Maize and vegetables are also grown in rotation with the shallots. In the region of the red soil (south "Central Plain") Penyi and Dzodze are particularly famous for their thick stands of oil palms from

which kernel oil is prepared. Other food crops include maize - the foremost product of the area - cassava, groundnuts, cowpeas, sweet potatoes as well as pine-apples and bananas.

Besides farming, fishing is an important occupational interest along the coast. In the region of Keta the Anloawo are well known for their afafa (Jack or horse mackerel) sea fishing industry. In the west, fresh water fishing is carried on in the Volta. The afafa and herrings may be sold fresh; they may also be smoked by women who find a good market for them in Accra, Kumasi and Tamale<sup>(1)</sup>. Much of the daily supply of fish for local consumption comes from the Keta Lagoon; Sprat is a favourite.

The lagoon is also an important source of salt for local purposes and for trade.

Cattle rearing, as an industry, is also of some importance. There are a few thousand head of cattle north-east of the Keta Lagoon. Goats, pigs and poultry are common near the lagoons where they are kept under the coconut trees<sup>(2)</sup>.

The Keta Lagoon is one of the chief means of natural communication between the coast and the hinterland. In recent times, this has been supplemented by motor roads. A trunk road leads from Denu to Keta and Tegbi; along the littoral<sup>(3)</sup>. A

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1. For the sea-fishing industry in Anlo, see also R.M. Lawson, "The Structure, Migration and Resettlement of Ewe Fishing Units", African Studies (formerly Bantu Studies) Vol.17, No.1 1958 (pp.21-27).
  2. See Agricultural Survey - Western Tongu Area: T-V-T. 1955 (Ghana Government Publication).
  3. Feeder Roads in Trans-Volta Togoland, 1955 (Ghana Government Publication).

similar road running inland links Denu with Penyi, Dzodze, Hevi and Ave-Fiadenyigba in the interior. Again from Denu, the "confluence" of trunk roads, Accra is accessible via Agbozome, Abor, Akatsi, Agbakofe, and Sogankofe in the Tongu district. The alternative route is by way of a minor road from Keta to Anyanui where travellers are transported by steam launches over the Volta to Ada. There is a regular motor-car (lorry) service between Ada and Accra.

## (2)

### Grouping and Demography

Since the local government ordinance came into force in 1952, the Keta District has been divided into nine administrative units or local councils. These are Avenor, Central Anlo, South Anlo, North Anlo, Keta-Urban, Dzodze (including Penyi, Hevi and Ave-Afiadenyigba), Weta-Afife-Klikor, Some and Aflao.

At the turn of the century, each of the following units represented a state, enjoying a measure of autonomy or independent political status with a separate paramount ruler: Anlo, Avenor, Dzodze, Some, Klikor, Weta, Apife, Aflao, Penyi. Of course, Anlo as the largest single unit and the strongest militarily had always extended patronage to a number of these units (1).

All the units or Councils are effectively linked together by a District Council and a State Council - a Legislative body.

Recent events seem to suggest the possibility of a return

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1. See also the history of migration and settlement in Chapter 3.

to a former independent status in the near future (1).

The total population of the area, according to the census report of 1948 numbered 190,053. This includes 94,347 males and 95,053 females. The density of population given in conjunction with Ada was 155.7 persons per square mile. This is definitely one of the most densely populated areas of Ghana.

The total population broken down to the various ethnic units and indicating the educated members are as follows:

Unit	Total	Male	Female	Educated	
				Std.III-VI	Std.VII or higher
Apife-Wheta	3,153	1,591	1,562	92	12
Aflao	5,558	2,786	2,772	58	27
Anlo	86,136	42,628	43,508	3,570	2,100
Ave (Fiadenyigba)	3,392	1,623	1,769	3	7
Avenor	28,255	14,003	14,252	147	13
Dzodze	12,944	6,684	6,260	101	35
Fenyi	3,476	1,745	1,731	137	18
Hevi	2,230	1,062	1,168	-	-
Klikor	6,468	3,055	3,413	99	17
Some	14,053	7,105	6,948	605	266
Wheta	4,913	2,357	2,556	34	9

There are twelve towns and villages (5 along the littoral) each with a population of over 2,000. These include Keta (11,358), Anloga (5,649), Atsiavi (4,268), Anyako (3,957), Dzodze (3,874), Dzelukofe (2,982), Afiadenyigba (2,707), Abor (2,570), Aflao (2,485), Tsiamé (2,407), Kedzi (2,398), Weta (2,361) (2).

Table 20 of the Census Report dealing with birth places of the population gives evidence of a westerly migration of the Anloawo (including Ada).

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1. In 1957 a Government-appointed Commission, headed by Justice Van Lare examined problems arising from the amalgamation of ethnic groups into administrative units. A report is due to be released.
  2. Gold Coast Census Report, 1948.

The largest town of the State, Keta, had a population of 11,358 in 1948 as against 6,405 in 1931. Of the 1958 figures, there were 5,239 males and 6,119 females. Of these 1,419 had completed the primary school and 828 the middle school. There were 953 houses or compounds with 4,429 rooms. The number of persons per house was 11.9 and 2.6 per room (1).

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1. Gold Coast Census Report, 1948.



# SKETCH-MAP OF ANLO STATE SHOWING ROADS & TOWNS

## FEEDER ROADS

KEY

TRUNK AND SECONDARY ROADS

MINOR ROADS

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COM. RDS.

T-V-T. COUNCIL ROADS

NATIONAL FOOD BOARD ROADS

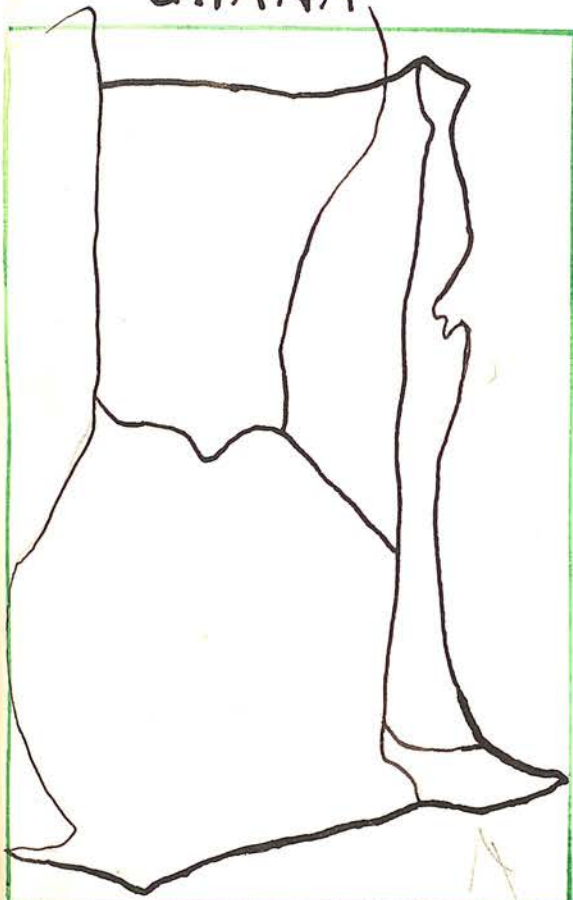
SCALE

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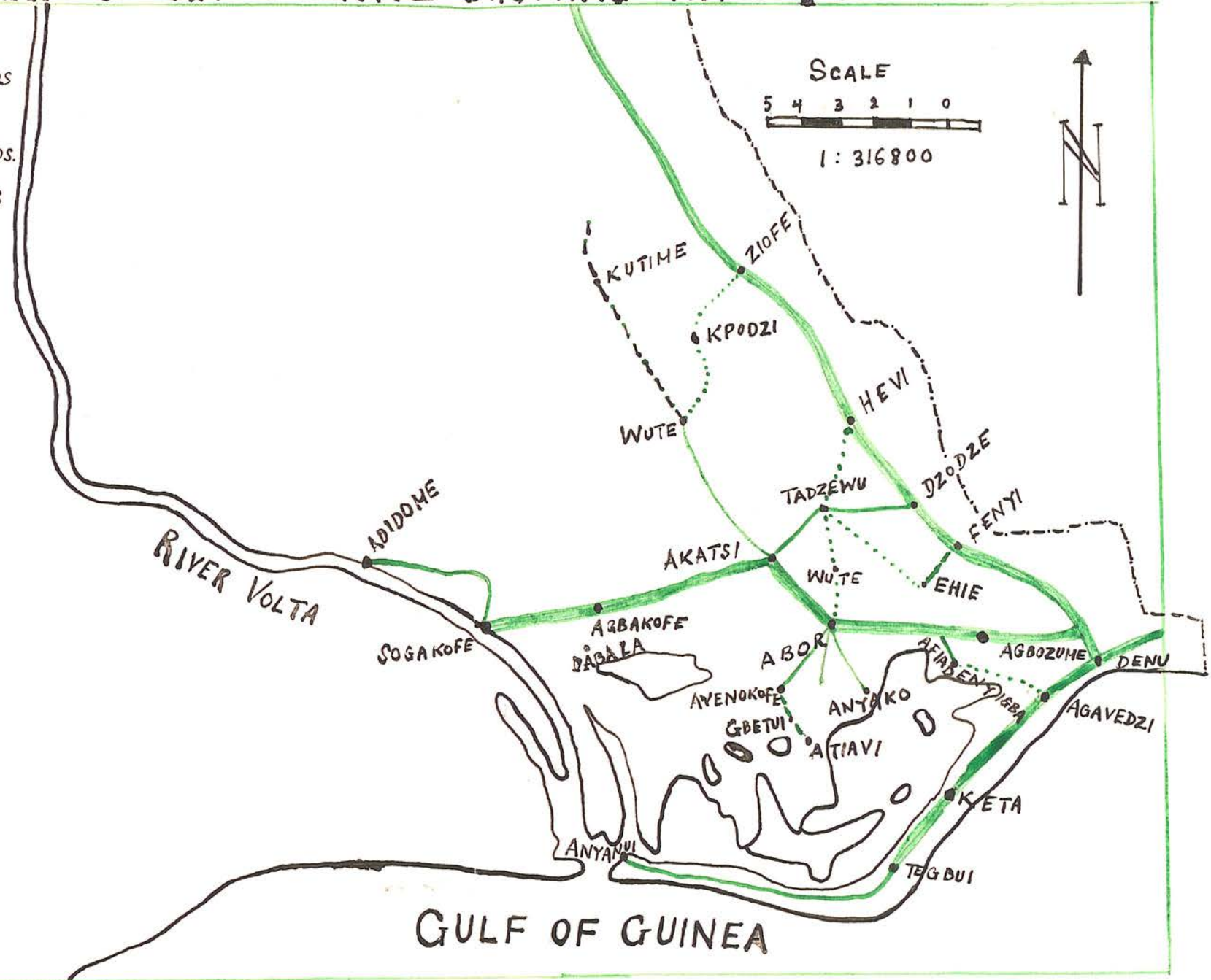


GHANA



RIVER VOLTA

GULF OF GUINEA



## P A R T I

## THE TRADITIONAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER IIITRADITIONS OF ORIGIN

## (i)

From Ketu to Anlo

Before proceeding to an examination of the religious beliefs and practices of the Anloawo, it will be as well to look into their traditions of origin. These traditions are of more than historical interest, for in them we have a mythological charter for most of the ritual functions obtaining in the Society. As Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown<sup>(1)</sup> have exemplified, myth is the key to ritual and ritual the gateway to the social reality.

As in any other non-literate society, traditions of origin have been transmitted from one generation to another. The account given below is largely based on oral narratives by Anlo informants in the field. Naturally, there is greater emphasis on the role of the ancestors of the present-day Anloawo than any other Ewe group, although the various Ewe states were known to have travelled together. Neither is the account given here intended to be an accurate historical reconstruction. Although some of the materials given here clearly have historical validity, perhaps it will require a detailed geographical study of the region traversed, the comparative study of the culture and the available history of neighbouring tribal units,

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1. See B. Malinowski, Sex and Repression in Savage Society, London, 1927.  
A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, Andaman Islanders, Cambridge, 1933.



say the Yoruba, the Fon of Dahomey, in order to give the account more than the semblance of history. Our main emphasis here then, is the indication of the original affinity between the various ethnic units comprising the modern Anlo State, the delineation of customs (including the cultural focus) which the people (Anloawo) themselves believe have been handed down from the ancestors and which influence their present mode of life.

There is complete agreement that the Anloawo, as part of the large Ewe-speaking group, migrated from a place called Ketu, now in Eastern Dahomey. Well-informed traditionalists go much farther back in 'history' in an effort to trace the origin of origins. According to these, the amedzofe or original home of the Anloawo (and indeed, of all the Ewe-speaking people) was Belebele (probably the site of the Biblical Babel). Others find a close affinity between themselves and the captive Israelites of Egypt. Like the diffusionist, they point to common cultural traits and trait complexes: twelve tribes of Israel and twelve major clans of Anlo; stern moral discipline expressed in the "Ten Commandments" of Israel and the Nyiko custom<sup>(1)</sup> of Anlo.

It is probable that these concepts of migration from Belebele or Egypt may have been derived from or influenced by Christian teaching; but it is interesting to note that even

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1. A form of capital punishment for a notorious criminal who is set upon and clubbed to death. For detailed information on Nyiko custom see Chapter 5, Section 3.

pagan illiterates subscribe to these views (1).

To bring the scene of migration to West Africa, places of earliest settlement included Adzaa, Oyo and Ketu. Oyo, now known as Old Oyo is situated in modern Western Nigeria. Ketu which is situated some miles south-west of Oyo is in modern Eastern Damoney. In the period of migrations to which we have reference, Ketu like Oyo, was Yorubaland. Thus the Ewe-speaking people appeared to have emigrated to Yoruba country.

The migration from Oyo and Ketu was prompted by various dissatisfactions including wars and the threats of war (2). From Oyo and Ketu the party comprising the ancestors of the present day Anloawo moved north-westwards first to Dogbo by which the Anloawo became identified as the Dogboawo, then to Tado situated east of the River Mono.

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1. One might compare these views on origin with the concept of Egyptian influence on West African religion, a concept to which noted writers on West African indigenous religion have learnt enormous support. See for example, J.J. Williams, Hebrewisms of West Africa; G.T. Basden, Niger Ibos; J.B. Danquah, the Akan Doctrine of God; J.O. Lucas, the Religion of the Yorubas; C.G. Seligman, Egypt and Negro Africa. Some of these writers have drawn conclusions on the origins of West African peoples. Thus J.O. Lucas believes that the Yoruba-speaking people migrated from Egypt and that other West African peoples such as the Ga, Ewe, Egun and Ibo 'must have migrated from different parts of Egypt just like the Yorubas'. However, Parrinder who has written extensively on African religion cautions: "until more positive evidence from other than religious sources is available, it may be advisable to consider the claim for much directly Egyptian influence in West African religion to be not proven". ("The Possibility of Egyptian Influence of West African Religion" in Proceedings of the Third International West African Conference, p.67.)
  2. The State of Nupe to the north-east of Oyo was believed to be the aggressor country at this time; that was around the middle of the 16th century.



At Tado the leader of the Anloawo was Wenya, an experienced hunter <sup>(1)</sup>. When the King of Tado proved inhospitable to the immigrants Wenya promptly placated him with a suggestion for a match between him and Wenya's sister, Asogoe. Adzasimadi the King was delighted and the marriage was consummated. Kponoe was born. He grew up to be such a favourite that soon he was declared the heir-apparent to the stool. The immigrants were at peace and all was contentment.

But Adzasimadi suddenly died. An almost immediate cloud of successional problems gathered at Tado. The late Adzasimadi's choice did not meet with the unqualified support of the elders at Tado. The old hatred for the Dogboawo, submerged by marriage alliance, was revived. The argument against the succession of Kponoe, put forward by the elders of Tado, was that both parents should have been Tado born. At any rate, Kponoe outwitted his half-brothers (Gbla Akoli and Ahafia) and succeeded in gaining possession of the stool which he lodged with his uncle Wenya. Subsequent discord between Dogboawo and the Tadoawo (those of Tando) led to a firm decision to abandon Tado. Of course, Kponoe elected to follow his uncle with the Tado stool.

From Tado the next settlement was Notsie to the west of the River Mono. The river must have been crossed during the dry season. Notsie is believed to be Nuatja in what is now French Togoland. It was here that Wenya, now old and stricken in years,

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1. Up to the present day, the remarkable intelligence of experienced hunters is acknowledged. Their keen perception, reasonable understanding of the natural world, courage and bravery make them ideal leaders.

proclaimed his nephew Kponoe the Fia (King) of the Dogboawo,<sup>(1)</sup> with the stool name Sri. He (Sri) became the first of a long line of Awoame Fiawo (Paramount Chiefs) in Anlo today.

The friendly King of Notsie, Agokoli I who had sheltered the Dogboawo from the hostilities of Tado, passed away and was succeeded by a ruthless 'Pharoah who did not know the Israelites'. Agokoli II, that was the name, found in Sri a rival at Notsie. According to the traditions, he set the Dogboawo, the most arduous tasks imaginable and succeeded in making them uncomfortable and unhappy. Relations between the immigrants and the Notsieawo (those of Notsie) worsened. That was some three centuries ago.

Matters came to a head, when without the motive of murder, the 'crown prince' (Agokoli's son) struck dead Sri's son. According to prevailing customs of blood vengeance, the Dogboawo demanded and received the head of Agokoli's son in atonement for the blood of Sri's son. Later events revealed that Sri's son never really died; the announcement was but a clever ruse purported to inflict severe punishment on Agokoli in revenge for continual ill-treatment. It was true that Sri's son had been dealt a severe blow that sent him reeling unconscious; but he later regained consciousness at the hands of skilful atikewola-wo (medicine-men). Sooner or later the facts came to light. Sri's boy was yet alive. This was the last straw. Agokoli was furious;

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1. This must have been in reference to that group of the Dogboawo under the leadership of Wenya. As a matter of fact, the Dogboawo included a much wider unit than the ancestors of the present-day Anlo. One source includes the following ethnic units: Ewenuawo, Beawo, Togoawo, Aboboawo, Wetaawo, Anloawo, Klikoawo, Someawo, Aveawo, Fenyiawo, Afifeawo, Mafiawo, Tsiameawo, Agaveawo, Taviawo, Tokoeawo, and Tanyi-gbeawo. (See P. Wiegrabe, *Ewegbalexexle Akpa Enelia* (Ewe Reader Vol.IV), Bremen 1938, p.29.



ill-treatment for the Dogboawo was intensified. Anticipating the escape of the Dogboawo, he caused a wall of enormous thickness - several feet in diameter - to be built around Notsie<sup>(1)</sup>.

Partly from a guilty conscience and partly from fears of further hardships at the hands of Agokoli, the Dogboawo planned an escape from Notsie, in spite of the wall. It must have taken weeks of secret systematic planning to make a way through. But they eventually succeeded in wetting sufficiently a section of the wall least frequented by the Notsieawo. On the night of escape, amidst drumming and dancing that fooled the Notsieawo, an old member of the group performed the rites of exodus. Raising aloft a sword three times to the skies and three times to the earth, symbolic of the invocation of the powers above and beneath, he prayed thus:

'O sky, Earth, Mawu who has scattered human beings  
on the face of the earth;  
Thou who has protected us from Ketu to Notsie  
Open now to us a way through this massive wall  
That we may sally forth to find peace and refuge  
beyond.' (2)

According to the legend, the old man pierced the wall three times with the point of the sword. The young men heaved and a part of the wall crumbled. Children and women led the way. When the night was far gone and the Notsieawo steeped in

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1. A traveller who had visited Notsie in 1927 gave the following dimensions of the remains of the wall: Height 6 ft; width 18 ft. If in spite of natural elements this much survives after more than two centuries, it is estimated that the original height may have been 15-17 feet and width 28-30 feet. For details, refer P. Wiegrabe's *Ewegbalexexle Akpa enelia* (Ewe Reader, Volume IV).
  2. See also Paul Wiegrabe, *op.cit.*

sleep, the men left off drumming and bolted. That was around the mid-17th century.

The fugitives from Notsie, according to the tradition, included the ancestors of the present day Ewe-speaking people of Trans-Volta Togoland and southern French Togoland. But not all of these escaped at one and the same time, and not all of these bolted on account of Agokoli's misrule and cruelty. Natural factors such as the over-population at Notsie, the overcrowding of available (suitable) land, famine and the quest for adventure all played their part.

The Dogoboawo travelled southwards to the coastal zone. Two sections of this party were under the leadership of Wenya and his nephew Fia Sri. These travelled to the far south, throwing off colonies of settlers. Tsevie is mentioned as an important settlement after Notsie. It is situated in French Togoland, a few miles north of Lome, the capital of French Togoland. While some members of the party settled here, others continued southwest until they reached the lagoons and creeks by the east of the Volta mouth. Wenya's party reached the site of the present village of Atiteti by the east of the Volta mouth. By the help of canoes hollowed out of borassus palm trunks, they coasted along the eastern shores of the Keta lagoon until they landed at Keta where Wenya's children Akaga and Avanyedo founded a settlement. Moving westwards, other settlements were founded on the long sand-spit between the Keta Lagoon and the sea. These included Tegbi, Woe and Anloga.

It must be mentioned that prior to the foundation of the settlements on the littoral, members of Wenya's party had already

established colonies in the present territories of Kliko and Weta.

Now, back to Sri's party. Sri and his uncle had parted company at Gafe. While Wenya was founding settlements between the lagoon and the sea, Sri and his group continued explorations in the forests north of the lagoon where the Aveawo, Fenyiawo, Dzodzeawo, Mafiawo, Afifeawo established various colonies. Sri continued southward to Found Anyako, Alakple and Kodzi. From Kodzi, Sri learnt of his uncle at Anloga. Later, both uncle and nephew re-united at Anloga which became the capital of the maritime state of Anlo and the permanent home of Sri. It is possible that additional waves of immigrants arrived later, thus increasing the population and accelerating the spread out to the territories inland.

## (2)

### The Forgotten Stool

After settlement in at Anloga, Sri realised that his Stool, the symbol of chiefly authority, had been forgotten at Notsie. But remember the circumstances in which he had bolted from Notsie! How could the stool ever be retrieved? He had no alternative but to bring it back, for the Stool, in effect, a tro or nature spirit, had already expressed dissatisfaction by a chain of misfortunes. A severe famine had overtaken the land and there was much unhappiness. The tro-priests and the bokowo (diviners) were consulted. Evil had come upon the land because the spirits of the fathers, unshrined in the stool were not with them. The symbol of power and the guardian spirit must be restored.

On the advice of his uncle, Wenya, Sri instructed his children Fui Agbeve and Azimehada to make the journey to Notsie for the Stool. Asogoe, the mother of the children, objected to her children undertaking a mission the result of which was certain death at the hands of Agokoli. Her objections prevailed.

Thereupon, the sisters of Sri, Kokui and Abui, volunteered their own children Adeladze and Atogolo for the errand. The young men overcame the hazards of the journey, faced Agokoli and tactfully demanded the restoration of the Stool. Agokoli would not surrender the Stool until he had exacted a long-standing vengeance on behalf of his murdered son. He wanted the limbs of Sri in exchange for the Stool. By a clever artifice, a body identical in features to Sri's was tendered in evidence of Sri's death. Agokoli was appeased and surrendered the Stool.

In appreciation of the services of his nephews, Sri pronounced his nephew Adeladze the heir to his Stool. On the death of Adeladza, then his own son, or a representative of his own clan could succeed. Sri himself was of the Adzovia clan and his nephew of the Bate clan. This was the beginning of a tradition creating two chiefly clans in Anlo. Until today, the Awoame Fia or paramount Chief is elected alternately from the two clans.

The following is a list of paramount chiefs and their clan affiliations in chronological order:



<u>Paramount Chief</u>	<u>Clan</u>
Sri I	Dzovia
Adeladza I	Bate
Agode	Dzovia
Kofi	Bate
Nditsi	Dzovia
Aholu	Bate
Atia	Dzovia
Ahiasa	Dzovia
Letsa Gbagba	Bate
Amedor Kpegla (died 22/7/1906)	Bate
Sri II - (1907 - 1956)	Dzovia
Adeladza II (1958 - )	Bate

(3)

#### Ties With Notsie

Ever since the days of the 'restoration', an intimate link has been forged between Anlo (State) and Notsie.

As will be exemplified in the next chapter, of the two categories of traditional trowo or nature spirits, the Hogbe-Trowo or trowo introduced from the traditional home (Notsie) carry greater prestige than the Dzokpleanyi-Trowo or trowo of purely local origin. And because of the veneration in which the former are held, they generally make up the leading du-trowo of the State i.e. town tro or trowo acknowledged by the whole State. The priests of such trowo maintain close liaison with the mother-tro

(or counterparts) at Notsie. They are said to rejuvenate or renew the spiritual power in their Hogbe-trowo by the performance of periodic rites at Nosie. The Hogbe-trowo include Kaklaku, Awadatsi, Togbui Gbe, Gbla or Awanyevi, Awadowaklui, Bate, Aka, Gadze, De Dzoli.

By virtue of his traditional position as both secular and religious head, the Awoame Fia also maintains liaison with Notsie for ritual purposes. Periodic rites are performed at Nosie, on behalf of the Awoame Fia, in acknowledgement of former ties. On the installation of a new Paramount Chief, his trosi (tro priest) title is awarded by the priest of the leading tro, Nayo Fliko of Notsie. Aside from the religious implication, it is in acknowledgement of Notsie as the scene of the installation of the first Paramount Chief of Anlo.

#### (4)

##### The Original Inhabitants of Anlo

Very little was known of the original inhabitants of Anlo. However, Sokpewo (core flakes), sofiawo (chipped tools) and especially relics of cults, established beyond doubt, the evidences for prior habitation.

According to the information available <sup>at this time</sup> of settlement from Notsie, the whole of the hinterland or the interior was nothing but gbelala or thickly wooded, almost impenetrable forest. Along the littoral there were some traces of habitation. The immigrants, so the tradition went, inspired such terror that all but two of the original families fled. Hostilities and the

difference in language later forced even these last families to withdraw. The two families were Gbekukui and Konyi. At Anloga the trowo Gbaku and Dutokonyi remind worshippers of these two families. The rites connected with these trowo are performed by representatives of the Tsiame and Bame clans.

## CHAPTER IV

### MAIN FEATURES OF ANLO TRADITIONAL MAGICO-

#### RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

A traveller in Anlo is struck by the predominating, all-pervading influence of religion in the intimate life of the family and the community. Visible material evidences of religion abound. There are the ubiquitous legbawo and agbonuglawo (idols). In their gaping posture, they seem to say: we represent more dynamic structures and spirits within the compound, within the village. Groves speak for themselves as the abode of spirits and the place of esoteric knowledge. Within and without the compound, here, there, may be seen an individual or a cult group deep in prayer, invocation of spirits or offerings to ancestral beings. In short, one finds a visible manifestation of everything that may be termed religious. There are positively no atheists or agnostics. Everyone is a staunch believer in, or worshipper of, one or more divinities.

In such a dense religious atmosphere, the diversity and multiplicity of divinities are not strange phenomena. The sea, the lagoon, the river, streams, animals, birds and reptiles as well as the earth with its natural and artificial protuberances are worshipped as divine or as the abode of divinities. Historical associations and the peculiar characteristics of these natural and artificial phenomena condition their worship.

The basis of the religion of a people must be found in their philosophy of life. The philosophy of life of the Anloawo,



perhaps like most of African preliterate societies, is aimed at life - life for the individual and life for the social unit. As Westermann puts it:

"Life is the one great thing which matters. To preserve life is the real aim of religious practice.....

Life in the African sense includes health, abundance of food, and a happy environment."<sup>(1)</sup>

It is this quest for life both for the individual and for the group which bolsters religious thought and practice. If religion develops in mankind what may be called a sense of dependence upon super-sensible powers, as Radcliffe-Brown maintains, then the proper performance of religious actions and observances must have as their goal the desire to increase one's hold on life, to provide some kind of insurance against threats to life, or the disruption of the social unit. Thus health and long life, children to carry on their line, material well-being, success in hunting, rain, the growth of crops and the multiplication of cattle, victory in war<sup>(2)</sup> provide some of the specific benefits of religious practice. But these are also indices of life and of group continuity. The acid test of religion is "man's behaviour in a crisis. What he does when stirred to the depths of his being, when he is racked with pain, when his crops fail . . . that constitutes his religion"<sup>(3)</sup> If the crises of life threaten life,

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1. D. Westermann, "Africa and Christianity", London, 1937, p.80.
  2. A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, "Structure and Function in Primitive Society", London, 1952, p.153.
  3. R.H. Lowie, "An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology", New York, 1934 p.304.

whatever is done in such circumstances must be aimed at restoring confidence and the perpetuation of life for the individual or the social unit concerned. In the face of such contingencies, therefore, the African finds help in his faith in the hidden forces and in the personal ancestral spirits.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the traditional preliterate Anlo society where the natural resources are relatively meagre, where the inexplicable natural environment poses a threat to life and where the people are flanked by warlike tribes and neighbours, we find the clue to their philosophy of life: it is aimed at life. The multitude of religious and magical duties and prohibitions which are common among the Anloawo cannot, in fairness to their philosophy, be interpreted as burdens and obstacles. On the contrary, they are the means of reassuring themselves, of guaranteeing their life. "The craving for power", often believed to be "the driving force in the life of African religion" derives, as Westermann states, from "a feeling of incapacity and in an obstinate desire to overcome it; it is a search for help and comfort, a means of maintaining and strengthening life in the midst of a thousand dangers, and a way of conquering the fear which shoots its arrows from every hidden ambush. Man is weak and what he needs is increased strength. The world about him is powerful: this is more than amply proved by the evils which afflict him, for they are caused by powers greater than his and aiming at his destruction. The absorbing question for him is how to acquire some of this power so that it may serve for his own salvation or that of the group for which he is responsible."<sup>(2)</sup>

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1. Edwin Smith (ed.) "African Ideas of God", London, 1950 p.29.  
 2. D. Westermann, op.cit. p.84.

In the following paragraphs of this chapter, we discuss, in outline, the main features of Anlo traditional magico-religious belief and practice, as they function to maintain individual and social life. Within the compass of a chapter, it is far from being an exhaustive account. However, the materials provided here achieve the desired objective of contributing an essential background to our study of religious change.

We may distinguish four categories of the supernatural:

- (a) Mawu or the High God, associated with the Heavens,
- (b) Trowo or the nature spirits of the earth,
- (c) Togbenoliwo or the ancestral spirits,
- (d) Dzosasa and ama representing the "animatistic" forces.

# (1)

## The Concept of Mawu (1)

Sir A.B. Ellis touched off a controversy when he declared in his books<sup>(2)</sup> on some West African tribes some half-century ago that the concept of a supreme being (or High God) was introduced to West Africa by the German missionaries. His statements, based on contemporary travel literature, have since been corrected in the light of the more extensive and exact knowledge of the supernatural world of the West African that we now have. Although it is admissible that Christian influence has been reshaping the supernatural concept of the West African, Christian monotheism

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1. The meaning of Mawu is obscure; an informant suggests mawú, meaning unsurpassed.
  2. Ellis' books include: "The Ewe-speaking People, London (1890)"; "The Tshi-speaking People, London (1887)"; "The Yoruba-speaking People of the Slave Coast, London (1894)".

was certainly not the progenitor of the African concept of a Supreme Being or High God. Parrinder who has written a number of anthropological books on African religious concepts has this to say:

"There is no doubt that Christian ideas have greatly modified general religious ideas, in the coastal areas in recent years. But even today much of the interior is little affected, where pagans are in great majority. Ellis himself admitted that the Twi-speaking peoples had been little affected on other subjects by centuries of commerce with the Europeans on the seaboard, and that their inland kingdoms were "mere" specks in the vast tract of impenetrable forest, which hence would only with difficulty change a fundamental religious belief."(1)

Captain Rattray, also a firm critic of Ellis in regard to concepts of the supernatural, writes of taking "a firm stand against a school of thought - the Ellis school - which denied that the conception of a Supreme Being in the West African mind, and his place in their religion, were due to any cause deeper or more remote than the influence of Christian missionary teaching".(2)

Bosman, the Dutchman who wrote on the subject more than 150 years before the German missionaries of Bremen and Basel ever set foot upon the Coast has this to say:

"It is really the more to be lamented that the Negroes idolise such worthless Nothings by reason that several amongst them have no very unjust idea of the Deity, for they ascribe to God the attributes of Omnipresence, Omniscience, and Invisibility, besides which they believe that He governs all things by Providence.

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1. Parrinder, "West African Religion", p.19.
  2. Rattray, "Ashanti", p.139.



By reason God is invisible, they say it would be absurd to make any corporeal Representation of Him. . . . Wherefore they have such multitudes of images of their idol gods which they take to be subordinate Deities to the supreme God . . . and only believe these are mediators betwixt God and man, which they take to be Their Idols."<sup>(1)</sup>

The concept of Mawu or the Supreme Being, is thus traditional to the West African. Among the Anloawo, it is one of the oldest and the most fundamental articles of faith. In theory, Mawu is the most important single category of deities. He is not worshipped in the sense in which the trowo and the ancestors are worshipped; nevertheless, he exerts moral influence on all creation including man and trowo, for he is the creator of all, the fountain of life.

In the Anlo theory of cosmology, Mawu is the first cause, that creator of the universe who himself was not created by anyone else. Of course, there is no exact knowledge of how Mawu himself came into being. Nor is there a clear statement of how man and the world came into being. Knowledge of these will require sustained investigation of traditional mythology, entirely free of western education and christian dogma. Though Mawu created the world, he is not an immanent being. Like other African High Gods, he is far away in the inaccessible sky; but there was a time, according to a myth, when his abode was quite close to the earth. The continual experience of various annoyances from mankind compelled him (Mawu) to move to distant heights, the present position of the sky. It is this remoteness of Mawu which accounts for the importance of the role of the

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1. Bosman, quoted by Rattray, op.cit. p.140.

trowo (nature spirits). Like men, the trowo have been created by God and are all children of God. But they are closer to God and serve as messengers or intermediaries between him and men. The attributes of Mawu include omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. The rains, the harvests, the good things of life, fertility, children, health are the gifts of God expressing his abounding goodness. Only goodness is ascribed to Mawu; the trowo and the ancestral beings, on the other hand, are responsible for good and evil and may be highly vindictive.

The fact that Mawu is worshipped through the trowo suggests that there are no Mawu priests or Mawu cults. Belief in him is a philosophy rather than a living faith. His qualities and demands are willingly admitted, but they exercise little direct influence on practical life. It is a religion of the thoughtful, not of the multitude.<sup>(1)</sup> Mawu has no direct sociological significance, but this aspect of the subject is further discussed below.

Among the Ashanti, however, there are evidences of the worship, and sacrifice to 'Nyame', the 'Sky God'. There are temples and a priesthood. Every compound in Ashanti contains an altar to the sky God, in the shape of a forked branch cut from a certain tree which the Ashanti call 'Nyame dua', literally God's tree (the botanical name is *Alstonia Congensis*). Between the branches, which are cut short, is placed a basin, or perhaps a pot, and in this receptacle is generally to be found (besides the offering) a neolithic celt ('Nyame akuma', God's axe).<sup>(2)</sup>

Perhaps the clearest example of the regular worship of the

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1. Westermann, "The African Today and Tomorrow", London, 1949, p.92.  
 2. Rattray, op.cit., p.141.

Supreme Being in West Africa is found among the Dogon of the French Sudan. Here we find group altars for God (Amma) which are communal property and the chief is usually the officiant. There are also special people who give personal service to God and become his priests. Normally such persons are possessed by a strange force, and on the advice of a diviner they consecrate themselves to the service of God. A woman may find a sacred object and build an altar to God there or at her home, with earth taken from the spot where she found the object; there she will sacrifice. A priest (called "Companion of Amma") offers regular sacrifices after he has been consecrated with special rites. Priests and priestesses officiate at annual ceremonies.<sup>(1)</sup>

Spieth, in his *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd Togo*, mentions special Mawu priests, distinct from tro priests among the Ewe-speaking people. If this is intended to apply to all Eweland including Anlo, then it is wrong. There are no traces of Mawu priests in Anlo. Probably, Spieth had in mind the states of northern Eweland.

As far as Anlo is concerned, the only sphere in which Mawu appears to be directly worshipped is in his manifestation as Se; but Se has more than one referrent. In one sense, Mawu and Se are directly synonymous and applied interchangeably. In another sense, Se implies law, order, harmony. Se in this connection is an attribute of God, not a distinct supernatural being. In the sense in which the world as the creation of God is an expression of God, so does Se express law, order, harmony as the purpose of God for the world. In yet another sense, Se applies to the

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1. Parrinder, African Traditional Religion, London, 1954, p.37.

capacity of God as the maker and the keeper of souls. The soul encased in a man's body is that part of Mawu in him. Finally, Se implies the destiny of man; it is synonymous with afa (divination) which is the word or the will of God. It is in this last sense that Se, as the animating principle, is individually worshipped. Every living man is believed to have his own Se, his Mawu whom he worships. When he dies, his Se dies with him. Worship in this sense embraces no conception of a "church" and is therefore distinct from the conventional group worship of a deity. This idea of Mawu is inextricably bound with the whole concept of afakaka or divination later to be discussed in this chapter.

How then does one come by the individual Se which he worships? This leads us to a discussion of nofedodo na se (literally, creating a place for Se). When a person has a train of misfortunes, or suffers repeated reverses in life, the custom is to seek explanation from an Amegasi or diviner who, in nine cases out of ten, will divine that the God who has sent you to earth wishes you to do nofe naye or create a place for him i.e. establish or make a representation of him. When it is decided that this should be done, the consultant, clad in calico (white), is led to a river or lagoon where his Se is invoked by breaking open an egg and offering maize beer (liha) with the following words:

It was only yesterday that Kofi (the consultant) was beset with problems. It has been revealed that only by the close companionship of his Se can he be relieved. So we have come to fetch you. May you accompany him! Let this be an end to his misfortunes!



Shower him with wealth and children!

At this stage, the diviner has already determined the object in which the Se wishes to live. It may be ayawogba (brass bowl) or an enamel plate. Whichever is required is provided by the consultant. The following may be provided by the consultant, or by the diviner and charged to the former: two turkeys (hen and cock); two white fowls (hen and cock); mud from various sources - from the sea, from River 'Gbagame' (in French Togoland), from River Volta, from River Mono. Prayer is offered over these and the Se invoked. A human figure is carved from kukoti (a plant bearing fruit of the plum species). This is placed upright in the receptacle provided - brass bowl or enamel plate. Before then, Se-ma (Se leaf) is placed in the receptacle at the seventh count and gin poured over it. With the help of the mud available, an earthen figure is made from the wooden one. The figure is whitewashed or coated with white clay. A fowl may be slaughtered over it. The earthen figure, now the Se, receives the blood and the fowl is used in preparing dzeekple (red meal) for the diviner and consultant.

The consultant is shaved to the skull and confined for seven days. The practice is known as sexodede. At the end of the period of seclusion, a second fowl is slaughtered, the blood offered to the Se. There is another round of feasting during which the consultant, elegantly attired, pays compliments to all those who have helped in translating his wishes into reality. He may pay the diviner anything between £10 and £5:16/-.

Thereafter, every other day, beginning from Ketasimlegbe or Dzitasigba (the day preceding Keta market-day or Dzita market-

day), he offers prayers to his Se, invoking its presence by means of soft drinks (say maize beer) and water. To feed it, akple (porridge) or cooked rice may be offered. No palm oil is acceptable. A piece of calico (white) may be used to cover up the Se. This is awudodo na se.

It must be observed that the worship of Se as above described has the features of a vodu or an ultra-personal nature-spirit merely linked with the Mawu concept which largely remains a 'belief without cultus'. Now back to the Mawu concept.

Though the concept of Mawu has not what we might consider a direct sociological significance, nevertheless, his reality as the basis of life, the supreme power or force animating organic and inorganic existence, and the underlying factor in all human relations, is not in doubt. Perhaps the high regard of the Anlo for moral precepts, exemplified by his industry, aversion to theft, respect for parents, truthfulness, as codified in the Nyiko custom, are directly connected with the belief in Mawu. Belief in his justice, his concern over the affairs of men, and man's sense of dependence, is best understood largely by the appreciation of songs and proverbial maxims which enshrine the gathered wisdom of the past, the traditional codified wisdom. Mawu nye ga (God is great) expresses the supremacy of God. Mawu nedi nam <sup>(1)</sup> (May God help me) is the prayer of the man about to undertake a journey or to begin an enterprise that is fraught with uncertainties. A song expressive of man's dependence upon the will of God states that See do ame da ametoameto! Dzogbese do ame da ametoameto (Se has sent man to the world, each with his own

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1. Literally, may God descend to me.

talent). In sickness, a man looks to God for recovery when he states, ne Mawu di nam ko mahaya (if God wills it I shall recover). At the point of death, a man invokes Mawu, not the trowo, who are believed to desert in the hour of death. Various proper names given to children attest the presence, the wisdom and the justice of God: Tsolesesi (Se <sup>(1)</sup> wills the future); Sesi (Se's hand); Setsoafia (Se the judge), (Sena-ya (Se the giver of sunlight) Vomawu (revere God). Newborn children which are in a special way regarded as given by God are named as Senanu (God's gift): Mawunyo (God is gracious), Mawuto (God's own), Mawuena (God has given).

In the light of these proverbial maxims and proper names, we can sum up in the words of Westermann: "While fully admitting that, as a rule, God does not live in practical religion and that the ideas concerning him are often nebulous, it cannot be overlooked that he is a reality to the African, who will admit that what he knows about God is the purest expression of his religious thinking and, in individual cases, also of his religious experience".<sup>(2)</sup>

(2)

### The Trowo or Nature Spirits

Existing side by side with the belief in Mawu is the concept of the trowo. Though not quite as deep-seated as the belief in Mawu, the trowo play an extremely important role in the spiritual

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1. It must be remembered that Se and Mawu are synonymous and used interchangeably.
  2. Westermann, op.cit., p.73.

life of the Anlo. Belief in trowo has many ramifications and divergent forms. As nature spirits, they are chiefly connected with the earth and the various natural and artificial protuberances on the surface. The word trowo suggests a troubler or a confuser; it implies a god or spirit being who confounds its client or worshipper with an over-growing number of demands, some of which may be conflicting,

As we have already noted above, trowo are the intermediaries between Mawu and men. They are the children of Mawu and are sometimes referred to as Mawuviwo. Unlike Mawu to whom nothing but goodness is ascribed, the trowo are capable of good and evil. They minister, but they also kill. They are imagined to have animal or human forms. They have hands and feet and are endowed with the five senses. Each spirit is symbolised by a collection of odds and ends - beads, stones, bones, parts of dead animals etc. - each of which has its own special value, and collectively they express the essence of the particular trowo.

We may ask, what is the basis for the selection of objects in nature as trowo? In a world in which nature is still a mystery to man, and man's insecurity and helplessness so pronounced, it is so easy identifying spirits in natural phenomena. A tree may be the means of succour from an enemy. In the mind of the Anlo, a trowo inhabits that tree. The Silk cotton tree is a familiar shrine in some parts of Anlo. Similarly, a life-saving stream, a beast, an animal or a fearful object may be endowed with spirit and worshipped as a trowo. Such an object, rightly propitiated, confers benefits; neglected, it punishes. There are also certain





mythical beings believed to have lived and died among the people. On account of their magical feats and miraculous deeds, parts of their body or their personal belongings have been preserved,

apotheosized and worshipped as trowo, in the communities in which such mythical beings were believed to have died. But some of these beings are also revered as ancestral spirits. (This aspect of the subject will be fully discussed under the sub-section on togbenoliwo or ancestral spirits.)

In Anlo, there are several scores of trowo, but no individual is expected to acknowledge and serve more than a few. Each member of the community ordinarily worships or serves those that affect his day-to-day social life, including those enjoined by his lineage, his clan and his village and tribe.

We may classify trowo into two large groups: (a) "Personal" trowo (b) "Public" trowo according to the level on which they affect the individual. While personal cults are in the nature of a modern association, membership being voluntary, lineage and public cults are binding and acknowledgment obligatory.

(a) "Public Trowo are both kin and regional-political trowo. The regional political public trowo are acknowledged collectively by the members of a to (ward), a village or town or by the whole tribe or state. The kin public trowo are those collectively acknowledged by the members of a family, a lineage or clan. The "public" trowo are some of the oldest divinities of the community, not a few of which trace origins to Notsie or Hogbe, the ancestral home. These constitute the Hogbetrowo (trowo introduced from the original home). In view of their great antiquity and association with some of the oldest ancestors, they carry great prestige, in

the eyes of all. Very few "foreign trowo" or Dzokpleanyi trowo have gained as much prominence as the Hogbe-trowo.

Of the regional-political public trowo, we may list a representative few under two heads:

(i) To trowo (ward or divisional trowo): There are a few areas in Anlo where villages or towns are divided into towo (sing. to) or wards each with its particular to tro. Such divisions may sometimes become so rigid that the collective worship of common du trowo (du: town or village) is hardly acknowledged. This situation is quite typical of Dzodze of the "Central Plain" and Aflao on the border (French Togoland-Ghana), along the littoral. Below is a list of towo and the corresponding trowo of Dzodze town:

<u>TO</u>	<u>TRO</u>
Afetefe	Dzoli
Adagleledu	Kplikpa
Afeyeme	Gbe
Ablome	De
Fiagbedu	Damadi; Atsana, Amesikpe

(ii) Du trowo (State or village trowo);<sup>(1)</sup> these are collectively acknowledged by members of an independent political unit and by members of a village. Some examples of these are as follows:

<u>TOWN OR "UNIT"</u>	<u>DU TRO</u>
Penyi	Aka, Gadze
Agbozome	Nafe
Klikor	Kli
Anlo	Nyigbla, Bate

Of the kin group "public" trowo, we may distinguish two main groups:

1. The word "du" requires explanation. It applies to an independent State as well as to a village. For example, the Anlo State is a du, but each of the component villages is also a du.

(i) Fome trowo: these are the lineage group trowo, the group of worshippers being much smaller than a clan. In the large lineages, there might be segments, each segment with its additional trowo which remain the concern of the segment alone. The father of a compound family may also establish his own tro; with his wives and children they form a closely knit, compact cult group. But these have more of the features of a personal than public cult.

(ii) Hlo trowo: these are the clan trowo, each clan worshipping one or more acknowledged trowo. The larger clans are sub-divided into kponuwo (sing. kponu) or divisions, each kponu with its particular tro. The following is a list of the various Anlo clans, their kponuwo and corresponding trowo:

<u>CLAN</u>	<u>DIVISION</u>	<u>TRO</u>
1. LAFE	Wenya	Awadovaklo, Kodzikli
	Akpotsui	Awadatsi
	Setsi	Simedu, Tsiamitsi
2. MLADE	Kluluawo	Togbui Gbe, Sui
	Klutse Amekpafia	Nyaga, Togbui Gbe
	Kofa	Adebe, Togbui Gbe
3. DZOVIA	Gliawo	Mama Tomi
	Gblakoli	Asimatsonu, Wanyevi
	Azimexada	Afomagbetomee
4. BATE	Fui Avoke (Tro-Bate)	Bate
	Adeladza (Fia- Bate)	Bate (Fiazikpui)
5. LIKE	Alowo	Zio
	Xedzefu	Atsikpui
	Deigodolitsi	Dzomadodetongo

<u>CLAN</u>	<u>DIVISION</u>	<u>TRO</u>
6. KLEVIA	Klevia	Gbotonya, Kovi
7. AME	Ame	Mama Blolui
8. TOVIA	Atsutsowo	Mala, Togolo
	Etse Gbedze	Kotsi
9. TSIAME	Tsiamé	Tsali, Dutokonyi
10. BAMEE	Bamee	Gbaku, Gbekukuia
11. DZEVIA	Dzevia	Nyigbla
12. GAVE	Vetawo	Kaklaku
	Agovigliawo	Gbe, Tsixi
	Agomidroawo	Dzemu
13. LOTSOFE	Lotsofeawo	Awadatsi
14. VI	Viawo	Mama Asife
15. BLU	Bluawo	-

There is a certain amount of unavoidable overlapping of the kin group public trowo and the regional-political public trowo. Nyigbla, for example, is a public tro acknowledged by the entire Anlo unit; but it is also the special tro of the Dzevia clan. This may shed some light on the source of the regional political public trowo. Most of these are deities adopted from clans and lineages. Even after complete adoption, the core-group worshippers (trohoviawo) remain members of the original group (lineage or clan) from which adoption was effected. Ritual connected with such tro is initiated by representatives of the original group.

All public trowo, whether of the kin group or of a territorial-political nature have as a goal, provision for the welfare of the group concerned. A to tro, for example, confers benefits



on all members of the territorial unit, including aliens and immigrants. Benefits conferred are of a general sort: rain, human and soil fertility, warding off dangers, sickness and epidemics. Matters of purely personal interest as individual wealth, personal health come within the purview of family, or personal trowo discussed below.

All public trowo provide ritual sanctions for the authority of territorial leaders as well as the heads of the various kin groups. Members of a cult or persons owing allegiance to a common tro develop a sense of belonging, esprit-de-corps, a 'we feeling', that, in effect, contributes to the solidarity of the group, territorial or kin. In this regard, Nyigbla, a tro associated with the state as a whole, the highest of Anlo trowo, serves the function of uniting the State around a common cult. Interesting enough, Nyigbla is no Hogbe tro, nor is it a Dzokpleanyi tro; it is an Amedzro tro - foreign tro, imported from Gbugbla, on the other side of the Volta.

Before we begin a discussion of the "private" trowo, it is worth while mentioning the occupational trowo at this stage. These stand midway between the "public" and the "personal" trowo. Where a whole community or the greater part of members is engaged in the same economic activity, a cult designed to protect the interests of that economic group, assumes a public character when the entire community takes interest in, and subscribes to the ritual ceremonies. In this respect, a localised professional tro is become co-terminous with a "du tro". Indeed, a number of "occupational" trowo have, in this manner evolved into regional political public trowo.

Occupational public trowo are especially identifiable

with deep-sea fishing communities along the coast. Examples of such communities with special trowo abound: at Woe, there are Bakpotoe and Fungo; at Keta - Bzelukofe there is Awleketi. Because of the specialisation required by smelting, smiths collectively worship a common occupational tro, Gu. These will be further discussed in the next chapter.

(b) The "Private" Trowo: These serve the personal interests of the members of the cult group; membership is voluntary. Indeed, they have the features of modern clubs and associations.

A variety of circumstances occasion the birth or the establishment of a private tro and such circumstances may dictate the special function of the cult. A private cult may be established by an unwilling founder in the throes of sickness. A boko (diviner) diagnoses the sickness as due to possession by a spirit which cries for the founding of a new cult. Such a cult may cease to function at the complete recovery of the founder.

In another circumstance, a person may contrive to establish a cult with the object of boosting his own prestige, or of obtaining economic returns. With these objectives in view, it is his duty to popularise the cult all he can, by giving a series of elaborate repasts: when the cult is become well established, the founder-priest has a large following and this may be satisfaction enough for his ego. Where the economic gain motive is uppermost, the founder-priest may be consulted and a fee charged.

One remarkable feature of the private trowo is their comparative transitoriness. As old ones die out or become less popular, new ones are established. However, a few old ones have stood the test of time. Among these may be cited the Yewe cult,

the most elaborate and most influential private cult in all Anlo. But this will be discussed in a separate category.

Besides the classification of trowo into both "private" and "public" cults, we have also referred to trowo according to their sources of origin. These are the Hogbe, Dzokpleanyi and Amedzro trowo. (Below are various trowo arranged according to this classification.)

The Hogbe-trowo, as earlier touched upon, claim origin from Hogbe or the original home. The priests of such trowo maintain close liaison with the parent trowo or counter-parts at Notsie, the object being to rejuvenate the power immanent in their own trowo. Because of the great antiquity associated with them, they enjoy a measure of popularity and prestige. In matters of tradition, the priests and the associated cults are useful storehouses.<sup>(1)</sup> Hogbe-trowo may form both "private" and "public" cults.

The second category, the Dzokpleanyi constitutes the largest group. It applies to all trowo native to the new settlement. The majority of the private cults come under this category. They are less prestigious than the Hogbe-trowo, but (with minor exceptions) seem to command more respect than the Amedzro-trowo.

The Amedzro-trowo or 'the stranger gods' are the imported trowo, imported from neighbouring tribes as a result of social

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1. Because of the prestige enjoyed by such trowo, the practice in recent times is to contrive to bring over an influential tro-priest from Notsie to establish a cult. The normal course is sickness, and diagnosis in terms of possession by a spirit at Notsie which seeks a home in Anlo. The news is communicated to the tro-priest at Notsie who comes over for the purpose of establishing the new cult. By this process, expensive though it is, a new private tro has a meteoric rise to vie with age-old Hogbe-trowo. The priest or the owner of the new private Hogbe-tro enjoys a corresponding prestige in the eyes of the community.

intercourse. Though they are generally considered as at the bottom of the cult hierarchy, yet some of the imported cults in Anlo, have for a long time remained leading cults; to wit: Nyigbla, Yewe, Afa.

This, in part, explains why we cannot be too rigid with these classifications as indices of the social status of groups of trowo. Factors such as the personality, the social status of the founder of the cult, and the special role of the cult in the community, all play their part towards the ascription of status and prestige to individual cults. In times of war, war trowo are of special importance and enjoy a measure of prestige unknown to the others. The prestige of Nyigbla - the leading war tro - is considerably boosted during war, for the belief is held that in battle, Nyigbla himself rides before the warriors, on horseback, with a bow and arrow.

The following is the classification of various trowo according to the categories discussed:

CLASSIFICATION OF TROWO ACCORDING TO THEIR PRIMARY SOURCES

ARRANGED IN ORDER OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

1.	2.	3.
HOGBE or NOTSIE-TROWO	DZOKFLEANYI-TROWO	AMEDZRO-TROWO
Awadatsi	Atsikpui	Nyigbla
Kaklaku	Afomagbetomi	Afa
Togbe Gbe	Adehe	Fofie
Gbla or Awanyevi	Bate	Kaklakadze
Awadowaklo	Simedu	Sebo
Bate	Kovi	Voduda
Nayo	Zio	Afram
Aka	Tsikpui	Hebieso
Gadze	Tsade	Agbui or Awleketi
De	Ewunuwotro	Lakadza
	Glimadodetome	Agbosu
	Sakpata	Kolia
	Dutokonyi	Sasinyeme
	Gbaku	Kplikpa
	Tegbli	Atito
	Tsali	Awadrahi
	Tokoto	Aveglo
	Nyanyake	Zio
	Dudu	
	Dokra	



(3)

Concepts of the Togbenoliwo, the Ancestral Spirits

Our discourse of the main features of traditional religion has taken us through two of the four categories of supernatural powers. The third deals with the Togbenoliawo, or the ancestral spirits.

As ancestor worship is intimately linked with concepts of the soul, it helps a better understanding of the subject to summarise here our views on the human soul.

Prior to his entry into the visible world, a man has already led a full life in the land of souls, where life is in many ways similar to one of the visible world. In this spirit world, a man has parents (or guardians), siblings, spouse and children.<sup>(1)</sup>

To make his way in the world, he chooses his mother; he is led by an elderly man towards two large oak trees (adido or ametiwo) the main branches of which serve the function of gates separating the spirit world from the visible one. The branches open and lock up periodically. It is an ill omen to arrive before a "closed gate". Still births and infant mortality are the unfortunate result of arriving before a "closed gate".

At birth, the child may be received with sacrifices, especially if it is believed the reincarnation of one of the forbears.<sup>(2)</sup> The person reincarnated is normally identifiable

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1. In the next chapter, the importance of making life in the visible world (kodzogbe) correspond to one of the spirit world will be explained.
  2. Where there are no visible identification marks of a reincarnated forbear, the bokowo (diviners) are consulted.

with that elderly man of the spirit world who has conducted him towards the oak trees, the gates of the spirit world. The same man may act as a guide to two or more and this explains why the same person may be reincarnated by two or more persons.

Now back to the time of conception. At this time, two souls, or better still, two components of a soul, one connected with life, the other with death, unite. The one comes from Mawu, the other from the land of souls. At death there is a permanent separation, when the part of the soul connected with life goes to Mawu, and the other to tsiefe (the spirit world), but not until after a period of 41 days, during which period it reveals itself to members of the lineage group.

Tsiefe or the spirit world is variously equated with man's original home or the portions of the earth inaccessible to the average Anlo or South Ewelanders. During ancestral rites when sacrifices are offered to the ancestors, it is this part of the soul which returns from tsiefe to feed. The spirit of a king or a chief returns to inhabit the stool during the sacrificial offerings. Similarly, the spirit of an extremely wealthy man in life returns to the stool as its temporary shrine.<sup>(1)</sup>

Now back to the ancestral cult. There are several manifestations of the ever watchful presence of the lineal ancestors. Elaborate mortuary rites, the custom of pouring out a drop of drink and water before satisfying oneself, or putting the first morsel of food on the ground, are some of the simple acts indicating presence of the ancestors in everyday life. The grave is not

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1. In this case a man's wealth is measurable in terms of the number of slaves bought.

the end; there is a life beyond it. Death merely separates the living from physical touch with the departed soul. In spirit, however, the departed are very much alive, maintaining a lively interest in the visible world, in the lineage. Thus a direct link between the living and the dead has been forged through the years and it is the responsibility of the lineage to maintain that link in periodic rites, or according as the ancestral spirits dictate.

For most of the lineages in Anlo, there are no specified periods for ancestral rites. Circumstances dictate the rites. A run of misfortunes in the lineage may be interpreted by the boko as a sure sign of ancestral displeasure. Probably the ancestral spirits have been neglected far too long, or the lineage has been remiss in the performance of traditional customs. After ascertaining the specific desires of the spirits, the lineage-head summons a meeting of the lineage and reveals the wishes of the forbears. Funds are collected and a day is set aside when offerings are made. There is a meticulous compliance with the wishes of the spirits, lest the slightest deviation occasion further displeasures. Only the animals demanded by the spirits are sacrificed. The rites are performed by the head of the lineage or the tsino and in the ancestral compound (awedome). They entail the slaughter of animals and the offering of drinks with supplications to the ancestors to pardon offences committed against their person, winding up with prayers for the life and prosperity of the members of the lineage.

It is important that all the ancestors should be mentioned at this time to avoid incurring the displeasure of a forgotten

spirit. To play safe, the tsino or lineage head may simply say: this is intended for the togbenoliawo (ancestral spirits), nyanyeawo kple manyemanyeawo ken, i.e. to all ancestral spirits of the lineage, known and unknown.

Ancestral rites may also be performed on the eve of an adventure or when a member of the lineage has met with a piece of good fortune. It may be as simple as a libation of maize flour and water poured at the entrance of a house or in a field. In either case, the function of the rites is an acknowledgment of the patronage of the ancestral spirits. To respect the leaders of the lineage who stand nearest in the line of descent to these ancestors is to acknowledge the patronage of the ancestors. Hence, ancestral worship supports the existing order in matters of lineage or kinship.

Hitherto, no mention has been made of stools in connection with ancestral rites. Two types of stool are recognised:

(1) Tunu, Awazikpui or Fiazikpui and (2) Hozikpui i.e. chiefly stools (formerly won through bravery or military exploits) and stools of wealth.

Annually, mostly between July and September, stools in Anlo are purified and fed. These rites are known as tsilele and dzawuwu. With the exception of the rites connected with the Awadada's (war mother's) stool, which has a quasi-public concern, all others are lineal and private. During the rites, the ancestors connected with the stool are invited there.

On a particular day of the week - Thursday mostly - the stool chamber is opened by its keeper to members of the lineage for consultations. On making a small offering to the keeper,

an individual may solicit special blessings from the ancestors. This custom is known as adefofo na Zikpuia.<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus the stool, as the symbol of an ancestor or ancestors performs roles identical to those of other ancestral spirits. But they are also symbols of authority. This aspect will be discussed in the next chapter.

In this outline sketch of ancestral worship, we have examined the purpose of ancestral rites: they express the link between the living and the dead, and the sense of dependence of the living upon the goodwill of ancestral spirits who reward and punish. As guardians of the living lineage, they provide for the welfare of the living descendants in good harvests, children and general prosperity. They punish intra-lineage crimes and offences against themselves. Clearly, their function is support for the existing order.

The role of the ancestors here is quite similar to roles among other West Africa tribes. Among the Mende of Sierra Leone, Kenneth Little observes, "Misfortune suffered personally or by the family as a group, is a sign of ancestral displeasure and is interpreted as a warning that the persons concerned should look closely into their conduct towards relatives as well as towards the spirits themselves."<sup>(2)</sup>

K.A. Busia writes in a similar vein when he speaks of the Ashanti ancestors and gods punishing those who violate the traditionally sanctioned code, and rewarding those who keep it.<sup>(3)</sup>

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1. Today such stool chambers are visited by men of all walks of life, including Christians and the educated.
  2. "The Mende in Sierra Leone", African Worlds, London, 1954, p.116.
  3. "The Ashanti", African Worlds, p.207.



Identical though in function, the Anlo ancestral cult does not compare with the more elaborate Adaye of the Ashanti where a whole tribe or chiefdom participates in the ancestral rites at a time.

Under the category of trowo discussed above we mentioned mythical beings whose human remains or personal belongings have been apotheosized as trowo on account of their magical feats in life. But these beings are also revered as clan ancestral spirits. Tsali is the best known of these mythical heroes.

According to the popular myth, Tsali was the son of Akplamada. The latter was famous for his magical feats, and so was his son. It seemed that Tsali acquired his magic independently of his father. With only a bowl of roast maize, Tsali was believed to have raised a whole barn of fresh maize in three days. The father watched his son in amazement and exclaimed: "My son has equalled me." But he decided to give him further instructions. He drew the entrails of his body, washed and dried them. Tsali transformed himself into a vulture, swept down upon the father's entrails and flew off. As he soared in the sky, Akplamada transformed himself into a silk cotton tree on which the son alighted; the former took possession of his own entrails and exclaimed: 'enya dofofo gake menya vuzuzu o', which means 'you know how to steal entrails but not how to turn into a silk cotton tree'.<sup>(1)</sup>

This incident was believed to have happened so often but without ill-feeling on either side.

Later, Akplamada died, leaving all his magical knowledge

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1. A precocious child who tries to outdo his father has the above maxim quoted to him.

to Tsali. This increased the latter's magical potency and, in time, he grew more powerful than his father in his life-time. Tsali lived to be very old, but he declared that he was not going to die the way of mortals. So he travelled alive to tsiefe, the spirit world. But the inhabitants of tsiefe would have nothing to do with a living man. He must first die (or be without his jawbone) to be able to secure a place among them.

Of course, Tsali returned to the world of reality (kodzogbe). Before a large crowd of the village folk, he removed his own jawbone and hung this on a tree. Then he sent for the crocodile which he rode to Tsiefe. A hut was built over the jaw-bone which became, first the Tsiamé clan tro, and later a territorial village tro of Tsiamé. But Tsali was also a mortal and when he died, of course, he became venerated as an ancestral spirit of the Tsiamé clan.

In Tsali, we have a case in which there is a break through the kinship barrier to raise to a national plane a particularly famous ancestral being. This was achieved without undermining the fundamental kinship character of ancestral worship, by apotheosizing Tsali as a tro. In my opinion, this accounts for the double deification of Tsali as a tro and as an ancestral spirit.

#### (4)

#### The Yewe Cult

Yewe has been mentioned among the "private" trowo, but in practice, it occupies a far more unique position. In recent years, it has eclipsed Nyigbla the leading du tro of the whole tribe. Cutting across state boundaries, it has grown to become

the largest and most famous private religious cult in all Anlo. In structure and organisation, it bears close resemblance to other cults; but Yewe is also a secret cult and has features peculiar to it.

Traditions of origin: Yewe is said to have originated from Xoda, a place believed to be close to Anecho in French Togoland.<sup>(1)</sup>

According to the traditions, a woman by name Busi was married to Togbi Honi, but the couple remained childless for years. This was an accursed state. A diviner who was consulted traced their childless state to a supernatural displeasure: they had ceased the worship of a certain powerful tro. To remove the curse, they must make their peace with this god. No sooner were sacrifices offered and the god re-acknowledged than Busi conceived and bore a child. To Honi, this was a grand exhibition of supernatural power, and he promised there and then to carry this tro with him when he returned to his people in Anlo. Honi was true to his word for when he returned to Keta with his (compound) family, he established the tro and named the cult Yewe.<sup>(2)</sup>

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1. Unfortunately I am unable to locate this place on the map. It is possible that a radically new French designation has supplanted the native one.
  2. Spieth believes Dahomey is the original home of Yewe in Anlo. Indeed, the secret languages of Yewe seem to support this evidence. However, Herskovits denies the existence of any secret cult in Dahomey. He claims that cults in Dahomey are secret only to the extent that members of a cult have in common certain knowledge which is hidden from or unknown to the outsider. As for the word 'Yehwe' itself, it is merely a synonym for the term vodu, "deity". (Herskovits, Dahomey, vol.1, p.242-243.) In this restricted sense, all cults in Dahomey may be regarded as secret. But they have none of the features of conventional secret societies of West Africa, such as Yewe, the Poro of Sierra Leone, the Egungun or Oro of Nigeria.

This cult soon became a panacea, curing all social ills. When the crops failed and famine threatened, Yewe saved the nation; when fishing was poor, Yewe replenished the waters with fish; when there was drought, Yewe provided water; in sickness, Yewe always found the cure; in epidemics, Yewe saved the nation. Honi did not hesitate to publicise the achievements of this new god and followers came streaming in. During the Danish wars at Keta,<sup>(1)</sup> it became necessary, <sup>t</sup>evacu<sup>e</sup>ating Yewe to Dzelukope three miles away. It was from here that the re-organisation giving Yewe its modern features began. Dissemination was rapid.

Today Yewe is the leading private cult in all Anlo. From here, the cult was disseminated to their northern Ewe neighbours. In recent years, branches have been opening in Ada across the Volta.

Characteristic features: Since the evacuation to Dzelukofe other god forms have been added to the original one of Honi so that the character of the cult is now determined by a number of god forms, the most important of which are So (or Xebieso) and Voduda (or Agbui). These two are regarded as spouses. So being male and Voduda the female. The acknowledgment of a multiplicity of gods, according to Spieth, suggests that the trowo and their worshippers became merged with Yewe, and in course of time,

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1. In 1782 the Danish Governor at Christiansborg (Accra) raised a local force with which he invaded and destroyed the Anlo countryside. The war was called the Sagbadre war. At the end of hostilities an agreement was reached by which Fort Prinzeinstein at Keta was built by the Danes (in 1784). See W.E. Ward, A Short History of the Gold Coast, London, 1956, pp.91-92.

they lost their identity in Yewe. This is one reason why Yewe partakes of features of a secret society as well as tro worship.

The Yewe compound is in many ways similar to other compounds - a cluster of houses, large and small within a wall or fence enclosure. There is usually an ante-chamber at the gate of the compound where non-member guests may be received by the Yewe priest. This suggests that only members are allowed access to the compound.

Within the compound two special languages are used in worship. These are the So language and the Voduda (or Agbui) language.<sup>(1)</sup> The former is said to be more complicated. Indeed, the demands made of the followers of So are said to be more exacting than those of Voduda.

Membership of the cult is open to men, women and the children of members. Like the private cult that it is, membership is voluntary, although Spieth also mentions resort to abductions, force and trickery.<sup>(2)</sup> Neophytes undergo initiation for a period lasting 14 months.<sup>(3)</sup> Spectacular oaths are taken before and at the completion of initiation rites. Great secrecy and eternal fidelity to Yewe are enjoined.

In the compound, there are various officers with specific assignments. There is the Dziwuida (or Dzidawui) who is responsible for shaving the initiates according to a pattern. He is

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1. These secret languages are a combination of Ewe and Fon dialects of Dahomey. The study of these languages prolongs the period of initiation within the Yewe compound.
  2. This may have been true in the past, in view of the many privileges and political immunities enjoyed by followers of Yewe.
  3. This may be longer or shorter, depending on the ability of the initiate.



also the official slaughterer of all sacrificial animals. The Katuida is the disciplinarian of the compound; he supervises the education of the neophytes. The programme of education includes instruction in the secret languages, dances, prayers, food taboos, attitude towards members and non-members of the cult, within and without the compound, and of the consequences of infidelity to Yewe or a breach of the decorum of membership.

Both the Katuida and the Dziwuida work under the supervision of the Humegawo who are responsible for running the whole compound. In taking major policy decisions the Humegawo seek the endorsement of the Midao or Hubono, the High Priest. Each Midao has a spokesman, the Dega. At Dzeluhope where the bulk of the material has been collected, my Mida or Hubono informant is Senior Hubono of the entire cult in Anlo.

If theory and practice work hand in hand, we have in the Yewe compound a more than adequate administrative machinery for running a complex organisation.

On the successful completion of the term of 'schooling', the neophyte undergoes the initiatory rites of full membership and emerges a full-fledged member of the cult. After the initiatory rites the neophyte, hitherto bearing the name Kpokpo, assumes the name Dasi (if a follower of Voduda), or husunu (male), vudusi (female) (if a follower of So or Xebieso).

Within the compound, opportunities for social advancement are many. Of the rank and file, length of service or full membership counts. An old husunu becomes distinguished with a new name, dahusunu; and an old Vudusi becomes natudaxo. Thus without holding any definable office, a member may be two steps removed from the neophyte, the Kpokpo.

In view of the secrecy surrounding <sup>it</sup> the cult, materials on the internal organisation of the cult are scanty. In a scientific quest, it is unwise to indulge in speculations where the facts are unobtainable. Spieth who had collected some of his materials from a former member of the cult, harped on the immoralities prevailing in a compound. Desirable girls - who were often picked for membership - were simply being ravished by the 'wolves' with the connivance of compound officials. While these allegations might have been true, we must be cautious of that 'inductive' reasoning which leads us to brand the whole cult immoral, because individuals have been guilty of immoralities. In Christianity, some Christians, including catechists and ministers may be guilty of immoralities, but we do not on this account brand the ethics of Christianity as fundamentally wrong. The fault lies with individuals and not with the institution.<sup>(1)</sup> Whatever the individual opinion of outsiders or former members, the influence of Yewe on the community as a whole is a mixture of fear and reverent admiration. To the young members of the community, Yewe offers attractions of a secular and religious sort.

Some of the attractions for membership include the power and prestige that membership brings. For a girl or woman, membership may mean an opportunity to be rid of a coercive family or of an undesirable husband whom she has been compelled by her family to marry. Yewe also offers opportunities to show off one's

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1. Severe public punishments are known to be meted to cult-followers guilty of misdemeanour. They may receive corporal chastisement - whipping on the bare back or kneeling on broken bottles. Such punishment in public is an unbearable humiliation and therefore an effective deterrent to immoral practice or misdemeanour.

fine clothes at the many dances arranged by the Yewe community and also at its annual religious feasts. It is a sight of great beauty to watch Yewe dancers in their regalia of multi-coloured clothes. For men and women the upper parts of the body remain unclothed. All wear red feathers for a head-dress. The women also wear beads and other ornaments. Such a parade may easily win the heart of a young ahe (i.e. non-member).

Probably, the simplest but most efficacious means of Yewe dominating or asserting its authority over the uninitiated members of the community is the device of "possession". On the completion of the initiatory rites, the initiate emerges from the compound with a new name. The old name is taboo. On return to the community, should the former name be mentioned, or in any other way offended, even if unwittingly, the Yewe follower becomes "possessed" by his god and turns wild. This is alagadzedze. He runs off into the bush where he is said to turn into a leopard. He may be recovered only when the offender has made or promised to make satisfactory restitution. Usually, such restitution is exacted according to the means or the prosperity of the offender, but it is no less than 24 shillings. (Today, the minimum charge is £35.)

During the period of alagadzedze, much social pressure is brought to bear on the offender; he is plagued by the parents and relatives of the "possessed"; the Hunoviwo<sup>(1)</sup> threaten him with reprisals from Yewe. Under fire of insults and intimidations, he surrenders and pays the requisite amount. The possessed is

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1. The Hunovi (or hudui) is a partial member of the cult. He swears the oath of secrecy which gains him admission to the compound. His chief duty is to act as a go-between for the Yewe compound and the community.

captured and reinitiated. Part of the money is spent on elaborate feasts.

In all cases of interaction with the community, Yewe dictates the pattern of relationship, and always to her advantage. Her influence on the judicial system has been great. All cases of dispute between Yewe followers and non-members are settled out of court by the Yewe "high priest" who has been given special judicial powers by the Paramount Chief. When the Yewe compound is in need of repair or renovation, Yewe recruits the whole community to rebuild or keep it in repair.<sup>(1)</sup> This duty has none of the features of mutual-aid or reciprocal obligation. It is a duty enforced by native law.

To safeguard the interests of the cult, Yewe maintains the closest and the most amicable relations with secular authorities, most of whom are believed to be open or secret members. Yewe is also said to be in league with all kinds of ritual specialists including necromancers, magicians, tro-priests, and diviners, even though these belong to the "humiliating" class of the uninitiated, the ahewo.

Yewe is par excellence a traditional illiterate society which has survived and thrived ~~so~~ well on its conservatism. As a secret society, it naturally has been apprehensive of all snooping "modern" or "progressive" tendencies.

As a secret society, Yewe does not compare favourably with the more prominent West African secret societies, particularly the Poro and the Sande of Sierra Leone. Whereas the latter

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1. This is the only occasion when non-members of Yewe are privileged to enter the compound.

serve as the matrix of the social order or the "controllers of morals", propagating "values socially important to the community"<sup>(1)</sup> as a whole, Yewe more closely resembles the modern lodge whose social values are directed primarily to the members of its "provident association". Naturally, as in any other lodge, motives for membership of Yewe lean heavily towards opportunities for personal aggrandisement, power, prestige, a rise in the social scale. With these personal ends to offer, Yewe will naturally appeal to some of the dissatisfied elements of the community who are anxious to improve their social standing or to achieve new status.

Later, we shall have opportunity to examine Yewe's changing attitude to a changing modern world.

(5)

Dzosasa or Ama, The Field of "Magic" or Medicine

The field of Magic and Medicine constitutes the fourth and the last category of the supernatural forces acknowledged by the Anloawo. The present device of isolating a field of Magic or Medicine cannot be regarded as drawing a firm line between the concept of religion and the concept of magic. In theory, both concepts may be delineated for analytical purposes; in practice, however, they merge. "The 'Suman' (may) spoil the gods", but they are often part of the worship of the gods.<sup>(2)</sup> It is in view of this fact that the term magico-religious has been found suitable

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1. Little, op.cit., p.192.

2. See Rattray, The Ashanti, p.90 for the categories of charms called "Suman".



as appears on the title page. In the minds of the Anloawo, the terms "magic" and medicine comprehended by the native words dzosasa and ama respectively, may be used interchangeably, for there is no "magic" without medicine and no purely herbal remedies can be effective without invoking the power of magic over the herbal concoction. This idea is aptly expressed by the aphorism "dzo nye ama" i.e. "magic" is medicine. In common parlance, however, a distinction is drawn between atike (i.e. therapeutic medicine) compounded from ama, and dzo which relates to protective and destructive charms. Our emphasis here is on dzo as a synonym to ama (or atike). What then is dzo?

According to the belief, Mawu has endowed particular objects in nature with a power, a force, a dynamism which though not "animistic", is nonetheless supernaturally effective. This power may be equated with the Polynesian mana or what Marett has labelled "animatism" in contradistinction to Tylor's "animism" or belief in spirits. Whereas anthropomorphic character and personality are without question ascribed to the trowo and the deified ancestors, the force in objects of a magical sort has not per se, the attributes of man, even though such force may be harnessed and utilised to act rationally. There is no medicine or "magic" cult.

The term dzosasa encompasses the whole field of magical charms for both destructive and protective ends. A charm is normally a mixture of varied ingredients, including animal, mineral or vegetable matter. Whatever the mixture, it must of necessity include ama, a processed herb. Knowledge of the medicinal value and the "magical" properties of such herbs is the work of supernatural agents. Under mysterious circumstances a man -

particularly, an experienced hunter - may be guided to the knowledge of the immanent power of such herbs. In other circumstances such knowledge may be gained by dreams and visions.

There is quite a large variety of charms in use, all of which cannot be catalogued here. Each one goes by a descriptive title indicative of its function - protective and destructive. The following is a list of a representative few. The emphasis is on their function:

(i) Bludewo: This is a form of incantation, the power of the charm lying in the spoken word. Literally, it means "hush them up". It is a purely protective charm. For example, a person is assailed with weapons. The attacked has no equivalent means of defence. If he has the charm of bludewo, he says the word (e.g. confound you!) and the opponent's weapons fall to the ground or become wholly ineffective.

(ii) Gbesa: This is in many ways similar to bludewo. Like it, its power lies in the spoken word; but it is more potent, its use more diffuse and serves both protective and destructive ends.

(iii) Fuke: This is conception charm. It helps the pregnant woman to live through the natural difficulties of pregnancy, especially a first pregnancy, and to annul all evil designs directed towards her. Above all, it offers protection against labour pains. It is purely protective.

(iv) Vidzike: This is a protective charm for the new-born babe. It serves to ward off evil spirits, particularly witches. It is purely protective.

(v) Akpoka: This is a most useful charm in battle. It

offers protection against sudden, unexpected attack. In possession of this charm, an enemy may strike with all might, but the blows are ineffectual. A bullet may also prove harmless. It is wholly a protective device.

(vi) Aza: This charm is particularly in use by the priests of troxoviwo.<sup>(1)</sup> When promises of mothers have been unredeemed, in spite of reminders, the priest, in revenge, resorts to the aza charm by which the woman in question is punished by indirect "poisoning". Indirect, because there may not be any physical touch between the tro-priest and his victim.

(vii) Layo: This charm aids fishing and hunting. The possessor of this charm is nearly always successful in his fishing and hunting expeditions. In hunting, the charm enables him to call to himself the escaping game.

(viii) Hiake: This is a charm for the amorous. Where one has been unsuccessful in an amour, the possession of this charm reverses the tide. Like the arrow of Cupid, it strikes one's paramour instantaneously and efficaciously. Without human guidance, the paramour gains access to you. This sounds like the fable of Solomon's mysterious stone of power from the spell of which no woman was safe.

(ix) Tsiduiké: This is a wholly destructive charm which plagues an enemy with fever or malaria. Other charms for inflicting sickness include Nulo for venereal disease, Tukpi (lit.

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1. A troxovi is literally, a tro which accepts a child. The implication is that women destitute of children come here to seek the blessings of the tro for the gift of a child. Oftentimes such women promise the tro the services of the expected child should their prayers come true. The shrine of such a tro may also serve as sanctuary.

short gun i.e. the pistol) for cramps in the side and the chest, and pneumonia; Tagba (lit. head-load) for neuralgia or migraine; Hodro for an invalid (of several years confinement); Amia for paralysis; Kpo for leprosy.<sup>(1)</sup>

(x) Zidoe: This is a vanishing or disappearing charm. This is used chiefly in the firing line where the person, assailed or encompassed by the enemy may do zidoe (vanish) from view of the assailants.

(xi) Vekle: Like Tsiduike above, it is destructive. Vekle's object is to sow seeds of discord between intimate friends by means of charm.

(xii) Kpese: Induces sterility in a woman or causes her to reach the menopause prematurely. It is wholly destructive.

(xiii) Wuafee: By this charm, an enemy or an undesirable person is made to leave his home and sojourn elsewhere. He leaves voluntarily.

(xiv) Gbonee: This charm compels a person with evil intentions or one who has actually committed an offence or an impropriety to make his own revelations. From the standpoint of the community, it is protective.

(xv) Dema: Ensures the continued fidelity of the female spouse in the home. The married woman who has sexual congress with an unlawful partner can no longer yield to sex relations with her husband without inviting serious consequences for herself and husband. Thus to refuse normal sex relations with one's

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1. Charms inviting illness may also entail the use of a black powder known as tsi. The sprinkling of the powder in the path of one's enemy with the accompanying malevolent intention is known as tsitsotsodi.

husband is to give grounds for legitimate suspicions of infidelity.

(xvi) Nudzo: (lit. mouth charm) cautions a person to think twice before severing connections with another. If by impulse, a wife gives up cooking for her husband, and the husband possesses Nudzo, she dare not return to cooking without suffering serious consequences. Rites of negation (of the charm) must first be performed before the resumption of cooking.

(xvii) Nudo: This charm protects properties, private and public. To tamper with a property with Nudo is to suffer a specific disability.

(xviii) Adzeka: This offers protection against witchcraft.

Some of the charms have been labelled protective and others destructive. That is to say they may be used for self-protection or be directed against one's enemies. In fact, all may serve both destructive and protective ends. Tsiduiké, for example, does not merely afflict with malaria; it also serves as a prophylaxis or an antidote against the attack of the disease. In this regard, to label a class of charms as "black magic" or "sorcery" and another as "white or good magic" is purely theoretical. As far as the Anlo charms are concerned the dichotomy is not wholly applicable. We can only speak of "black" or "white magic" according to the specific function of the charm at the time it is in use.

The importance we have attached to these charms is outside the frame of <sup>their possible</sup> efficacy. Considered in the light of modern scientific interpretations, most of them sound quite like the allusion to the fable of Solomon's stone of power with effective mastery over women. But effectual <sup>ive</sup> or not, these charms have a function, in as much as they reveal the psychological outlook of a



people, their fears and suspicions and their hopes of adjustment to an unpredictable world. The possessor of a charm feels himself to be a stronger and braver man because of it.<sup>(1)</sup> He has more confidence in himself. While some of the ends sought in the charms discussed are clearly nefarious, others like Dema and Nudzo make for marital harmony and family solidarity. In the community charms may serve as a deterrent to crime and therefore a "means of maintaining a sense of moral equilibrium".<sup>(2)</sup> A charm "provides a way whereby an aggrieved party can feel that the person who injured him is not going unpunished even though it is impossible to bring the malefactor personally to book".<sup>(3)</sup>

## (6)

### Ritual Specialists

The preceding discourse on the four categories of supernatural powers naturally embraces the ritual functions of various sacred specialists. These are trained personalities - male and female - who act as the mundane agents of the gods or the intermediaries between the gods and the rank and file of mankind. Their duties include the presentation of sacrificial offerings, intercessions with the gods and, most especially, divining the cause of sickness or misfortune and effecting a cure.

In the absence of Mawu cults in Anlo, the tronua (lit. mouth of the priest) or tro-priests with their cult servants are

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1. Smith, The Secret of the African, p.135.
  2. Little, op.cit., p.127.
  3. Ibid., pp.127-128.

easily the largest and the most important single group of ritual specialists. A man gains the distinction of being a tro-priest in one of several ways; he may have been "called" or singled out by the tro itself; he may have inherited or succeeded to the position by the rules of patrilineal inheritance; he may have established his own tro and is serving as its priest. We shall illustrate briefly how the tro is established in the latter instance.

The establishment of a tro is known as trolili. Let us assume that Kodzo has news of the fame of Kobla's tro and wishes this tro established in his own house for the benefit of his family. He comes to Kobla, tells him of the favourable news he has had concerning his tro and begs him to give him (Kodzo) of this tro. A day is appointed for the handing-over ceremony, as soon as an agreement is reached.

On this day, in the presence of members of his own family, Kodzo presents to Kobla a goat, a turkey, a chicken, drinks, a few yards of calico and blue baft (bisi). The latter places ama - a collection of special herbs - into a calabash at the seventh count. On top of ama he moulds a small anthropomorphic (earthen) idol. A meal of corn flour into which palm oil has been kneaded is served and eaten by all the members of Kodzo's family present. This is the communion that binds them to the tro. Henceforth, it is become their family tro. Kobla then addresses the tro: "the business we have just accomplished (nusi mieva li fifia), may it be fruitful, may it give children and prosperity to the family".

Later, male and female children of Kobla's family may be

shaved before the tro and part of the hair placed before it. The hair is symbolic of the soul and in placing this before the tro it is being charged with specific responsibility for the welfare of the children.<sup>(1)</sup>

Payment for the service of establishment of the cult may be anything between £20 and £16.

Aside from such general services as offering children and family prosperity, the tro detects and punishes crime. In the event of theft in the family, the tro reveals the thief. Wrongful accusation (nudedeamenu) is similarly adjudicated by the tro.

To keep the tro ever at his service, Kodzo, as both owner and priest of the tro must be absolutely honest in all his dealings. He must not cheat. Then too, his food must not be cooked by a menstruating woman; nor must his cook talk while cooking.

Where the owner of the tro - in this case Kodzo - does not intend to act as tronua or tro-priest, the choice of the tronua must be made the day the tro is established. If Kodzo dies, the tro may be patrilineally inherited by his son, but the latter must first be instructed by the priest on his obligations to the tro.

Now back to the general discourse. The duties of a priest include the maintenance of the tro shrine and the communication of the utterances of the tro to his worshippers. A priest may communicate directly with his tro or do so with the help of a fiele (i.e. a medium).

Tro-priests are generally assisted by cult servants who may have been dedicated to their task by parents who bore them in

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1. Note in this connection, the practice of separate burial of relics - hair and nails.

answer to prayer.<sup>(1)</sup> Cult servants assist the priests in a number of ways; but most important of all, they are the spokesmen of the priests. Both priests and cult-servants observe taboos in food and follow a prescribed decorum in public.

The cult-followers represent the rank and file in the cult hierarchy. These are subservient to both priests and cult-servants.

Besides the normal functions of a tro-priest communicating the wishes or demands of his tro to his followers, he is also engaged in the diagnosis and cure of sickness. In the task of diagnosis he has since been outclassed by a class of specialists: the diviners who include the boko and the amegasi.

The boko determines the causes of misfortune or illness; he foretells what the future holds in store. The philosophy of the boko seems to be that Mawu has a testament, will and a purpose for everyone. To lead a happy and successful life, that will or purpose must be revealed and abided by. This is where the sacred role of the boko comes in. One is struck by the amazing ingenuity of the boko as he throws out his afadu (revelation) and proceeds to interpret. (2)

Bokowo are consulted by men from all walks of life,

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1. A child born in answer to prayer is called a Doflevi; such a child may be dedicated to the service of a troxovi.
  2. There are altogether seventeen afaduwo.

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| (i) Kpolidzogbe  | (ix) Esamedzi    |
| (ii) Olimedzi    | (x) Gudamedzi    |
| (iii) Yekamedzi  | (xi) Tukpemedzi  |
| (iv) Dimedzi     | (xii) Tulamedzi  |
| (v) Lusomedzi    | (xiii) Letemedzi |
| (vi) Nolimedzi   | (xiv) Kamedzi    |
| (vii) Aklamedzi  | (xv) Tsiemedzi   |
| (viii) Ablamedzi | (xvi) Fumedzi    |
|                  | (xvii) Tsietula  |

including certain of the tro-priests. Their society has some of the features of a secret society, and for this matter, there is the closest co-operation among them.<sup>(1)</sup>

The role of the amegasi is in many ways similar to the boko. But the boko is more of a professional than the amegasi. The former performs with marbles, nuts or other instruments, the latter without any at all. The amegasi also performs the role of the necromancer (noliyola).

A more specialised but restricted diviner is the akadola or aka-diviner. He performs primarily at court, at an arbitration or any judicial circumstance in which the culprit is in doubt. When an accused denies responsibility for a crime, either the accused or accuser - whoever is found guilty - may appeal to aka to prove his sincerity or innocence. Thus the Aka specialist is normally invited by the accused or accuser and not the prosecution. He puts both accused and accuser through a series of ordeals. The aka-diviner buys his medicine from the dzoto or medicine-man and learns his art from an experienced practitioner.

The functions of the diviner are complemented by the dzoto and atikewola. The latter is a medicine-man interested solely in

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1. Afa-divination (afa is corruption of Yoruba Ifa) in Anlo is largely based on the system obtaining in Yorubaland (modern Western Nigeria) from where the art originated. There are two methods in use: in the simpler type known as the agumega, 4 nuts (8 halves) are strung on either end of a cord; when the cord is thrown on the ground, the number of convex or concave surfaces of nuts determines the interpretation. The more complex method involves the manipulation of 16 palm nuts (hudekuwo) and the use of written signs on a board or the ground. For a detailed study of afa or the science of divination in general, see B. Maupoil, La Geomancie à l'ancienne Côte des Esclaves, Paris, 1943, and G. Parrinder, West African Religion, London, 1949, p.152 ff.



the pharmaceutical properties of herbs. The former makes use of magical charms. In fact, he is the manufacturer or vendor of charms. He is feared but secretly resorted to.

Both diviners and medicinemen may serve as witch-doctors, employed to detect adzetowo (witches), the beings credited with leaving their own bodies at night, having nocturnal conclaves, sucking the blood out of their own children and close relatives, and generally performing what Prof. Evans-Pritchard has described as supposed to be doing what cannot be done,<sup>(1)</sup> or what M.J. Field has described as a mere "obsession".<sup>(2)</sup>

The supernatural or mysterious power of the witch - who may be a man, woman or child - does not, however, always lead to destructive ends. In many ways, it also seeks the prosperity and the good of the witch himself (or herself) without continual detriment to others. By the help of witchcraft, a person may become wealthy, intelligent and generally help to raise his social status in the community. This aspect of witchcraft is known as akpase. But the "nefarious" practices of witches so completely outshine their positive functions that witchcraft is generally associated with evil. It is in view of this that the witch-doctor commands a certain prestige in the community.

Finally, in ancestral worship we also have a ritual specialist, even though there is no organised priesthood. The official directing the ancestral rites may be the lineage head or the eldest surviving member of the lineage, especially when such

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1. See Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande, 1937.
  2. See Religion and Medicine of the Ga, 1937.

rites are performed in the ancestral home - Awedo. The lineage head performing ancestral rites bears the name tsino or adefola.

Our discourse on the main features of traditional magico-religious beliefs has led us through four categories of supernatural powers: Mawu, trowo, tobegnoliwo and dzosasa (harnessing of impersonal supernatural power). The religious attitude to these categories is expressive of one theme: man's dependance upon the powers in nature, infinitely superior to his (own power). This theme is clearly supported by the fact of propitiation which is become the dominant feature of the worship of the trowo and the togbenoliawo. Every sacrificial offering has the element of appeasement, atonement, expiation or reconciliation.

Perhaps the boko (diviner) speaks the mind of all cults in Anlo, when he declares that the purpose of Afa is to unravel Mawu's will or destiny in respect of each mortal. To find that will or fate - which is the occupation of the boko - and to enable another to abide by it is to spell happiness for that person in life. But to know the will of another and to abide by that will is tantamount to dependence upon the whims and caprices implied in that will.

In dzosasa or medicine, the same attitude of dependence prevails, even though with changing emphasis. In trowo and ancestral worship, the object of dependence is a spiritual agent; in medicine or dzosasa, the agent is the meticulous adherence to a set formula, which is characteristic of the harnessing of an impersonal supernatural power.

While recognising these dogmatic aspects of the magico-religious system, we cannot lose sight of the expression of these

dogmas in human or social conduct. It is in these that we watch religion in vivo. In the following chapter we examine ritual in its proper social perspective.

## CHAPTER V.

### RELIGION IN THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION.

To understand religion in Anlo, we must define its place in the social organisation, its interrelationship with other institutions, through the medium of ritual. There is ritual concerned with political institutions, ritual concerned with economic activities, ritual concerned with social relations, and every major phase of the individual's life. These observances, positive and negative, serve as important integrative factors in the society. They sanctify the political and economic institutions, add supernatural force to the sanctions of law; they provide a spiritual background for every phase of social life.

In the following paragraphs the interrelationship of religion and the social organisation is analysed so as to bring out the effective role of religion in social life. Magico-religious beliefs and practices validate the social and political order, while the latter also help in maintaining religious sanction in society, thus bringing out their complementary aspects. Customs validate ritual, but ritual also gives supernatural support to the sanctions of custom.

(1)

#### Kin Groups and Cult Groups in the Kinship System.<sup>(1)</sup>

In this section we examine the relationship between kin groups/

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1. I should mention here that the present study of the kinship system and certain features of the social organisation is far from being exhaustive; in fact there is an unavoidable condensation and simplification. However, the main features that are crucial to our study of religious change are clearly presented here.

groups and religious groups. The object is to find a broad religious basis for the kinship organisation.

It will be recalled that in the previous chapter we dealt with four categories of the supernatural, two of which were found to be lacking in collective responsibility. The belief in Mawu, though of far-reaching significance, is without 'cultus'. Even where the worship of Se intrudes upon the more passive and generalised concept of Mawu, this form of worship leads not to a cult, but to an essentially individual and personal approach to a supernatural power. Similarly, the "animatistic" concept, though of immense social and ritual values to the people concerned (Anloawo) it is, by and large, individual and personal. Knowledge of a charm (dzo) may be shared with others, sold or transmitted as a free gift, but the notion of collective responsibility is quite foreign to it. Each possessor invokes his own charm in his own time and in his own way. We may rightly say, then, that there is neither a 'Mawu cult' nor a 'charm cult'. It is tro and ancestral worship which have group characterisation, and it is these which will largely feature in our present discourse. However, the absence of 'Mawu' or charm cults should not be over-emphasised in an analysis of the religious basis of society. Belief in Mawu and the "animatistic" concept may generate healthy sentiments of integrity, respect for the rights of others, and eventually aid the fulfilment of one's moral obligations to the common society. Such sentiments may serve as tacit bonds linking members of the community and of the State into a generalised "cult group", albeit a fluid, amorphous group. Now to the kinship structure.

(i) The 'Immediate Family': The smallest unit in the Anlo kinship organisation is the immediate family or the family of procreation. It comprises a man, his wife or wives and children, all residing in a house or a portion of a compound for the wider



kin group. Where a new compound has just been established, this group may serve as the nucleus or the core-group of resident members. Though the immediate family as a group is an integral part of the wider kin group, sharing in its economic and social relations, yet in one sense it asserts its independence and exclusiveness. Members worship a private tro or technically, a vodu which is not necessarily acknowledged by the wider kin group. To this extent the immediate family constitutes a cult group. The vodu protects the interest of the group and members acknowledge this protection by the collective observance of certain avoidances which conduce to the unity of the group. Among other functions, a vodu offers insurance against marital infidelity by the wives of the father of the group. In this regard, it performs functions similar to the dema discussed under the category of charms.<sup>(1)</sup> On the death of the father of the group such a cult may disintegrate or be inherited patrilineally.

(ii) The Lineage (fome): Rising above and absorbing the immediate family in the kinship structure is the fome or the patrilineage. This is a localised group members of which trace common patrilineal descent from a named ancestor. It is not definitely known how many generations make up Anlo fome. Genealogies collected were not entirely helpful. There is a suggestion of indefinite depth, thus foreshadowing the clan which is recognised as a wider kinship group. Perhaps the lineage as a corporate group extends no more than five to seven generations. This will include great-grandparents and great-grandchildren.

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1. See chapter 4 (5).

In the lineage, personal property is transmitted patrilineally, a man's heir being his son. Members have common access to lineage property, such as lands and groves, administered by the lineage head - the most senior male member of the group.<sup>(1)</sup>

A number of factors impress on members the sense of belonging to a group. There are a number of taboos or observances believed to have been transmitted by the ancestors to the lineage. These include food taboos and characteristic behaviour patterns. The common observances as well as the integration of the group under a common lineage-head contribute to group solidarity. But the most effective single factor contributing an esprit-de-corps, a feeling of belonging to a closely-knit group is descent from a common ancestor, as crystallised in ancestral worship. By ancestral worship the lineage is united around the lineage-head whose authority derives from his status as the nearest living descendant of the ancestor, and his ritual role in this connection. While we cannot legitimately state that the lineage is simply a function of the ancestral cult group, we can maintain that the ritual embodying the latter generates sentiments which make for the maintenance or the survival of the former.

Every lineage also acknowledges one or more afedome trowo (lineage deities) to whom offerings are made. While segments of the lineage may set up their own trowo or voduwo, or as individuals subscribe to the workshop of private trowo, entirely outside the lineage, afedome trowo definitely belong to the lineage and workshop is enjoined. A lineage tro, like the lineal ancestor, provides/

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1. For further discussions of the status and role of the lineage-head see Section 2 below.

vides for the well-being of the group, individually and collectively. The tro cult group thus coincides with the ancestral cult group and helps to reinforce lineage solidarity by common worship or regardful attitude to a common deity.

(iii) The Clan (Hlo): The clan as the widest (patrilineal) kin group unites several lineages into one large social unit, members of which claim descent from a common putative patrilineal ancestor. Unlike the lineage, it is unlocalised, members being widely scattered. But it has a head who is elected from the various lineages comprising the clan. As we have already noted, there are twelve to fifteen clans in Anlo<sup>(1)</sup> each with its own taboos and observances, marking the one from the other.<sup>(2)</sup>

The election of a head, the observance of common taboos, belief in descent from a common ancestor, even if putative, ascribe to the clan group identity (albeit an amorphous group, especially in modern times). Clan ancestors - mythical beings and national heroes of the distant past - are identified with the clans and periodically propitiated. Even when it has become impracticable for the widely dispersed members of a clan to attend ancestral rites conducted by the clan head, members are believed to subscribe to such rites indirectly, through their lineage-heads.<sup>(3)</sup> There is also the case of continued lineage identification with the apotheosized mythical beings and national heroes of the clan. These foster a sense of affinity and of belonging to a cult group.

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1. See Chapter IV (2) for the various clans, their segments and corresponding trowo.
  2. The various clan taboos of quasi-totemic character are discussed later in this chapter.
  3. In practice, it seems that funds for the rites are obtained from clan revenues - the sale of palnuts from clan groves.

But it is in the worship of clan trowo that the clan is effectively delineated as a cult group. Most of the quasi-totemic taboos and observances so characteristic of a clan derive from tro prohibitions, although these may be given elaborate mythical origins. Unlike the more passive clan ancestral worship, members consult the clan tro as lineages and as individuals. As worshippers, they owe the tro certain obligations, as for example, contribution to the periodic rites and keeping the shrine fences in repair. Clan tro worship thus provides more explicitly than ancestral worship the basis for cult identity.<sup>(1)</sup>

(iv) 'The Kindred': Thus far we have discussed kinship groups members of which claim descent - ascertainable or putative - from a patrilineal ancestor. A man's lineage name and his membership of the clan are transmitted in the paternal line. But the term novi or relative (literally, mother's child) is applicable to persons within the patrilineage (or clan) and certain members of the mother's lineage. The implication is that bonds of kinship hold good on both sides of the lineage. This is the "bilateral" kin group. A man's full obligations to his relatives and the range of his own expectancies fall within this wider kin group. One's membership of this group is evidenced by the observance of the rules of incest on both sides, and possibly by inheritance from both patrilineal relatives and the mother's brother. It must/

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1. Where the clan tro has been absorbed by a territorial political unit, members of the original cult group will regard themselves as owners of the cult and will be identified as the core-group worshippers. The ritual specialists or ceremonial officiants in connection with the cult will always be drawn from this group.

must be emphasised, however, that son-inheritance is the rule and that inheritance from the mother's brother is voluntary and restricted to personal property only. It will also depend upon the degree of intimacy or attachment of a nephew to his maternal uncle (mother's brother)<sup>(1)</sup>.

While a man does not formally belong to his mother's ancestral cult group, he is, nevertheless, connected with the group and may actually make offerings to his mother's lineage ancestor, especially when it is known by divination that he (ancestor) requires it. However, identity with mother's cult group is more adequately expressed in certain forms of ritual behaviour than in direct cult group participation. Such behaviours are discussed in their proper contexts in other sections of this chapter. Here suffice it to say that some importance is attached to the mother's lineage and that this importance is supported by forms of ritual behaviour.

In this section we have examined the relationship between kin groups and cult groups in the kinship organisation. Each social unit is largely coterminous with a cult group, the latter sanctifying the former and contributing to its expression and maintenance. The study has also revealed the basis of affiliation to kin "public" cults. Although the discussion does not embrace regional-political 'public' cults, it has been implied that they derive/

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1. This dual system of inheritance and the recognition of the 'kindred' as the proper limits of the kin group seems quite typical of a number of West African patrilineal societies. See Westermann, Die Glidyi-Ewe in Togo; Little, The Mende of Sierra Leone, African Worlds p.121; Bascom, The Sociological Role of the Yoruba Cult Group, American Anthropologist Mem.63 (1944)

et al.



derive from the kin 'public' cults. In the next section we shall look more closely into such cults.

(2)

The religious basis of authority in The Socio-political System.

In the home or the lineage, in the village as a political unit, and in the battle field, men of particular capabilities are elected in accordance with established social practice, to function in the capacity of leaders. Elected in accordance with established traditions, rules and usages, custom itself validates and supports the authority of a leader. In Anlo, as in other preliterate societies, such sanctions are not enough; they must be further buttressed by religious sanctions.

In this section of the chapter we examine the various categories of leaders and the religious sanctions edifying their authority.

In the socio-political structure, we may isolate three main categories of leaders. There are heads of lineages and clans; there are the territorial and political leaders and there are the military leaders.

The lineage (fome) head is the oldest surviving member of a large social unit of individuals claiming descent from a common patrilineal ancestor. His influence extends over one or more compounds whose members refer to themselves as children of one ancestor. Such a person has risen to the office of lineage-head by the natural order of succession embodied in customary usage: he/

he is the oldest surviving brother of the deceased;<sup>(1)</sup> his appointment has been approved by the heads of the extended families. As lineage-head, he performs a number of offices within the lineage; but the most vital of these functions is one connected with his ancestral spirits; these provide additional sanctions for his office as lineage-head.

As lineage-head and the oldest surviving member of his group, he is nearer to the ancestors than any living member of the lineage. He is the tsino or adefola - the ritual official - at all major ancestral offerings. He is thus the intermediary between the living and the deified ancestors. And in view of the influence exerted by the ancestral spirits on the welfare of their living descendants, the lineage-head's position becomes ritually important to the kin group.

Above the lineage-head in the kinship chain of authority is the clan head who is the spokesman of the clan in relation to the ancestral spirits. Besides his secular functions as supervisor of the clan lands and groves and the arbitrator in intra-clan disputes, he performs ritual functions that edify his position as clan head. In the clan ceremonial compound at Anloga, he is responsible for all clan ancestral offerings.

Now for the regional-political leader. A new settlement normally begins with the establishment of a house or a single-roof/

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1. Ideally it is the oldest surviving brother of the deceased who succeeds to the office of lineage-head; in practice, however, a younger brother may be preferred, if he has the requisite qualities for the office.

roof dwelling. In time, more houses are built as the need arises and a compound is formed with a protective fence or wall. To relieve congestion a member of the compound establishes a new compound settlement in close proximity to the old compound. By this process of fission, several compounds may come into being in varying distance from the parent settlement. Some of the new settlements may be a fair distance from the old. In course of time, the new village-in-embryo divides itself into a number of to or kome (ward).

In theory almost all the members of a village claim descent from the founder of the parent compound. In practice, however, with the continued growth of the village, new compounds lose touch with the parent compounds. What is more, strangers completely unrelated to the original founder find their way in and around the compounds. New lineages are in emergence.

Now in a to or kome (ward) with a number of compounds, the amega or hanua (elder) of the ward is normally the oldest surviving member of the senior compound. Thus we have here in legitimate customary succession to political office, the sanctions for the authority of the ward leader. But, like the case of the lineage-head, his authority is further buttressed by ritual sanctions that lie in the discharge of religious functions.

In most towns and villages each quarter or to has a local guardian tro worshipped by the group. Such a to tro may be one of a number of trowo of significance to the whole village. But its location in a particular to creates a special attachment between it and the members of the to. They recognise it as their tro/

tro and look up to it to protect the interests of the entire to. Conversely, a lineage tro of importance to a whole ward may rise to such eminence as to be served by a whole village. Even in this latter development, the special attachment between it and the to remains unchanged.

Each to tro has its own priest, but the elder or amega of a ward, is an ex-officio priest and functions in close collaboration with the priest. He sanctions or authorises the establishment of the new to tro. During the annual tro rites, he pays the lion's share of the cost of sacrifices or authorises the levying of a special rate (penny per head or payment in kind), on all members of the ward. In the minds of the people, whoever serves their to tro in this capacity is, without question, the authorised dumega or elder. The elder thus unites in his person a dual ritual function; obligation to the ancestors of the to and obligations to the to tro. Thus he commands not merely the loyalty of his own kin group forming the core-group of the to, but also the entire membership of the to, including strangers, by virtue of common allegiance to a to tro.

Below the dumega, is the compound-head who performs similar but narrower ritual functions in respect of the compound membership.

Above the dumega, is the du fia (or asofohene) who has political control of all the towo within the village or town. He is ideally the most senior member of the most senior lineage of the entire village or compound. Ritually, he performs on a wider basis identical functions with the dumega especially in his relationship/

relationship with the du-trowo. Of course, in respect of ancestral offerings, owing to the 'heterogeneity' of the social group, he makes offerings only in respect of his own ward which is co-terminous with his kin group.

At the apex of the territorial and political graduation is the Awoame Fia or Paramount Chief whose political functions are directly complemented by his religious role as the State high priest. In this latter status, he performs a number of ritual functions as an additional sanction for his high office.

In the previous chapter, the position or the status of Nyigbla as the tro of national interest was discussed. By claiming the attention of all Anlo, Nyigbla, has served to bind together the 'nation' into one group, regardless of kinship bonds.

Now, the Awoame Fia, as the nation's high priest, is an ex-officio Nyigbla priest. He personally directs the two Nyigbla rites of the year - Fenu (June) rites and Kele (October) rites. He finds the money for the rites by authorising the levying of special rates in money or in kind.

As the State high priest, the Paramount Chief performs other ritual tasks on behalf of the community and the State. When an epidemic threatens or the rain has failed, he plays the leading role as a ritual officiant in an effort to restore "social equilibrium." These rites naturally serve as integrative factors, binding the people together, strangers as well as the descendants of the original settlers and providing ritual sanctions for the office of Paramount Chief.



In relation to his kin group, the Paramount Chief is the head of his clan - Dzovia or Bate - and performs clan tro rites through a representative clan tro priest.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the ancestral rites, he performs a ritual function of a narrower sort. He is the head of his lineage and the highest representative of the living members of his lineage in relation to the dead ancestors. All these functions provide additional sanctions for the office of Paramount Chief.

The third and final category of authority (for leadership), the military organisation, also has ritual charter.

When the State is at war, the Paramount Chief, as the State Commander-in-Chief might be expected to lead his army to battle. On the contrary, he remains at home to perform ritual tasks. He selects 12 - 24 representatives of the 12 - 15 clans represented in the State, and with the help of tro-priests and bokowo, he offers prayers and sacrifices to the ancestors of the land, and secondly, to the national war tro, Nyigbla. Victory or defeat depends, to a marked degree, on the unstinted support of the ancestors and Nyigbla whose priest is the Awoame Fia himself.

Directly in command of the fighting forces is the Awadada (lit. War mother), the field-marshal. Though he has clear-cut military obligations in time of war, some of his functions are clearly of a ritual character. He distributes the grains of corn to his lieutenants in notification of war; with the help of his Asafohenegawo/

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1. If the Paramount Chief is of the Dzovia clan, Tomi tro rites are performed; if of the Bate clan it is Bate rites.

Asafohenegawo or awafiagawo he leads the army to battle, although he himself does not take part in the conflict. He is securely guarded in what is known as the atsifo - a human rampart screening him off the main body of the fighting forces. Like the Paramount Chief at home, he seeks divine guidance with the help of a mass of priests and bokowo.

These manoeuvres are far less of military importance than of ritual significance. The Asafohene and the ordinary soldier in the field gain the psychological satisfaction that the performance of ritual in the Awoame and the Atsifome will spell victory. They fight with confidence and when victory crowns the show they are sure to ascribe it to the timely intervention of Nyigbla through the Awoame Fia and the Awadada.

In time of war, therefore, Nyigbla provides ritual sanctions for the authority of the Awoame Fia as well as the Awadada. Serving directly under the Awadada (the Paramount Chief's generalissimo) are the three wing-leaders; the Asafohenegawo or awakpollowo (i.e. generals) of the left, right and the centre wings. These are both military and political leaders who themselves have achieved military fame or whose immediate predecessors have distinguished themselves in battle and earned chiefly stools.

Besides the military and political significance of the stools, they have great ritual significance.<sup>(1)</sup> By virtue of the possession of a stool, an asafohenega is ipso facto a military leader.

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1. Refer to Chapter 4 for the discourse on Stools.

To a lesser degree, minor chiefs (asafohenewo) are awarded stools with identical ritual and political functions.

In this section we have analysed the three categories of authority for leadership; the leader of a kin group, the territorial-political leader and the military leader. Each category of authority is buttressed by religious sanctions. We may ask, why does a secular leader seek religious support for his authority, or how does it come about that magico-religious beliefs should validate secular authority? Perhaps an examination of the status of a chief vis-a-vis a boko (diviner) in a small village or community might offer an immediate insight into our problem. The latter might be more popular, prosperous and better respected in the community than the "secular political head", the chief. Perhaps it is in recognition of this social difference that a chief is also an ex-officio priest. The Paramount Chief himself is also the State high priest.<sup>(1)</sup> How does it come about?

When Nyigbla rose to become the first national deity of Anlo, it was believed that the Nyigblanua (the Nyigbla Priest) rose correspondingly to the highest status in the land. To maintain his original status as the first officer in the land, the Paramount Chief assumed the role of Nyigbla's chief priest in addition to his chiefly role. By so doing, he combined in his person, both political and ecclesiastical offices, and the corresponding allegiance/

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1. On the installation of the Paramount Chief nearly all the major rites are performed by ritual specialists including two priests and diviners (amegasiwo, tagbasiwo, bokowo). Much of the ceremony is believed to be ritual connected with his induction into priesthood.

cp. Eghik ...

allegiance of the people to his office became both political and religious. One can thus understand the inviolability of the person of the Paramount Chief. If his political office amounts to little, his status in relation to Nyigbla can always stand him in good stead. But the whole concept of a chief serving as an ex-officio priest or a leader performing quasi-priestly functions has deeper roots than the advent of Nyigbla.

A priest in the traditional sense is one who has been 'called', or a supernaturally appointed leader. To this extent, he will command spontaneous reverence among a naturally religious people. Evidently, the man in authority who can find some religious basis for his status is laying claim to the priest's 'call' and therefore advocating divine authority.

(3)

#### THE NYIKO CUSTOM.

In traditional Anlo, even though there was a Council of elders on both the local and national level, arbitrating disputes, punishing crimes, and generally upholding the sanctions of law and order, it was the lineage, more than the council that was the conservator of peace and virtuous living. Certain crimes and offences were ritually prescribed or taboo to the State and it was left to the lineage to enforce adherence or suffer the supernatural consequences.

The system of taboo in vogue was popularly referred to as Nyikofofo.<sup>(1)</sup> The practice dated from the early days of settlement/

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1. Nyiko means respect the rules or the habitual usages, and nyikofofo implies elimination from society, of an unsavoury practice, or of an undesirable person.

ment when strict internal discipline was enjoined as a necessary and sufficient measure of survival in the midst of hostile neighbours and constant warfare.

The major "sins" of the time included the following:

- (i) Murder or culpable homicide
- (ii) Theft
- (iii) Adultery
- (iv) Indebtedness
- (v) Falsehood
- (vi) Filial Disobedience.<sup>(1)</sup>

These evils require explanation:

- (i) Murder included murder by violence, by witchcraft (adze) or by dzoduame (the use of charm). Murder by witchcraft included causing the death or suffering of another through the machinations of a witch - by devouring his victim's soul or causing injury to it. It also applied to an attempt to make an unwilling person a witch. Murder by dzoduame included the practice of aza or poisoning in a variety of ways by the help of ama (medicine).<sup>(2)</sup> To cause the death of another or attempt to do so by any of the above means was tantamount to culpable homicide. Such a 'sin' was punished at the first offence by the Nyiko custom.
- (ii) Theft had reference to any and all forms of larceny, irrespective of the value of the stolen property or where it had been stolen. This was punished by the Nyiko custom at the third offence.
- (iii) Adultery included sexual intercourse with a married woman, seduction or flirtation in any shape or form. Like theft, it was punished by the Nyiko custom at the third offence.<sup>(3)</sup>

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1. See also Westermann, A Study of the Ewe Language (translation by Bickford-Smith), London, 1930.

2. See the discourse on dzosasa and ama, the field of magic and medicine in chapter IV Section 5.

3. For the first and second offences, the lineage (not necessarily the offender) was obliged to pay compensation of thirty-six shillings (or its equivalent in cowries) for each offence. If the lineage was a poor one, these payments resulted in serious lineage privations.



(iv) Indebtedness involved a sum of money as little as two shillings and sixpence. This was punished by Nyiko custom at the third offence.

(v) Falsehood included refusal to admit one's guilt at an arbitration of a lineage head or before a council of elders either on local or State level. A person adjudged guilty may appeal to the offices of aka-diviner; but when the aka-diviner confirms the verdict of the council, the guilty party suffers double injury: aside from making restitution for the crime for which he is accused, he is branded and logged untruthful. Such untruthfulness repeated the third time makes him liable to punishment by the Nyiko custom.

(vi) Filial disobedience may reach its height when the parent is urged to consider severing connections with the child (ma taku de dzi). To bring a parent to such a brink is a first step to punishment by the Nyiko custom. The third of such provocations admits of punishment by Nyiko.

The fourth, fifth and sixth offences may have the alternative of banishment into slavery.<sup>(1)</sup>

Now, to the Nyiko custom itself. Let us assume that a youth has been guilty of seduction or theft for the third time. This impropriety has gone beyond the limit of indulgence. To shelter him further is to incur supernatural displeasure for the whole lineage. "This youth is the ruin of the lineage", they cry. The local council of elders was intimated and the decision was to allow the taboo to take its course. One of the group was delegated to/

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1. Banishment into slavery was the only form of capital punishment for girls who infringed any of the recognised taboos. They were never subject to the Nyiko custom.

to apprise the Awadada at Anloga of their intentions. The Awadada was in charge of the entire punishment by Nyiko. A day was appointed for the execution.

During the interval all preparations towards the execution were made. The Nyiko drums<sup>(1)</sup> a male and female (trowo) - were made ready. The beating of the drums announced the fact that a recalcitrant member of the community had undergone punishment the Nyiko way. The executioners were also kept informed.<sup>(2)</sup>

On the appointed day, the maternal uncle of the would-be victim contrived to get his nephew to carry a message - often a ludicrous one - to a kinsman who was privy to the proceedings; the latter expressed profound joy at seeing the messenger and deeply regretting his inability to provide just then what was wanted. He besought him to stay overnight; the guest acquiescing, he used the opportunity to provide him with all the merriment that is a feature of Anlo hospitality to a stranger, and especially on an occasion such as that.

At night, when the whole family had retired, the messenger was awakened by his host and led out on some pretext, as for example to attend an elderly member of the family to the latrines. The messenger was made to carry a lantern. In a procession of three, the guest messenger in the middle, they walked towards a bush at the outskirts of the town. The procession led to Gbakute (ne egbea aku i.e., if you refuse to conform you die) a few yards/

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1. The vellum of the drums were said to have been fashioned from human skin.
  2. These preliminary transactions must be undertaken with such secrecy that the would-be victim did not suspect any evil whatsoever.

yards off the lagoon; at this spot, by a clever device, the rear and the front elders drew aside and the messenger was by himself. In a split second, before he had time to realise this, he was pounced upon by a band of three to four persons armed with clubs and iron bars. He was beaten on the head and neck till he succumbed. The body was dragged and buried in a shallow grave to be unearthed and devoured by prowling vultures. Swiftly, the message was carried to the drummers that the deed was done. The message boomed on the male drum a number of times: Miede za, miegbo za. Miede za, miegbo za, i.e., we went by night and returned by night. The second drum responded: Gbewoe nye nye gbe, i.e., I concur. To those familiar with the language of the drums, the message signified the end of a recalcitrant member of the community. The cloth of the deceased was spread on the hedge near by.

The next day, information reached the lineage elders and the council who had commissioned the Awadada, to the effect that the deed had been done. They felt much relieved. Later, when an ignorant person openly enquired of the man, he was told: Eyi toko atolia (i.e. he is gone to the fifth landing-stage) which is the euphemism for wofe nyiko de edzi (i.e. he has been taboo).<sup>(1)</sup>

By this Nyiko custom, the State was purged of evil-doers.

Here/

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1. This is the Nyiko custom as it functioned in the Anlo unit of the State. There were slight variations in form in other units, but the content was the same. In the Penyi unit, for example, the victim was dragged not to Gbakute, but to Adrume. For a general appreciation of the cultural values enshrined in the Nyiko custom read F.K.Fiawoo, The Fifth Landing Stage, a play in five acts.

Here is a custom which in content, is not far different from the application of the 'gallows' or the 'electric chair'. All three - gallows, electric chair, Nyiko - served identical functions; the riddance of the nation of criminals and the maintenance of a high standard of morality. But in form, Nyiko is far different from the gallows or the electric chair. Whereas the latter is a straight application of a nation's judicial machinery, the former is an intricate ritual which has deference not to a society, but to a supernatural order. And this is a major difference. In the one (i.e. the application of the gallows or the electric chair) a family (or lineage) does not have the temerity to surrender its own criminal. In the other, supernatural sanctions require it to do so.

The social function of the Nyiko taboo in the lineage and the tribe was quite obvious. No lineage could survive in the midst of unchecked reprehensible acts.

In the account above, the corporate responsibility of the lineage has been hinted at. When a member seduced a married woman, it was the lineage, not the individual that paid the ayifale or doho (i.e. compensation) of thirty-six shillings for each offence. A poor lineage was invariably thrown into financial straits in the payment of these compensations. Lineage lands and properties or even a member of the lineage might be pawned. The practice repeated constituted a grave loss to the lineage and the eventual decimation of the lineage itself.

Besides responsibility for debts, members of a lineage are bound to mutual assistance; one may not sue another, or even give evidence against another, <sup>(1)</sup> except in cases of the infringement/

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1. Westerman, Die Glidy-Ewe in Togo Berlin, 1935.

infringement of Nyiko taboos.

Let us view the social function of Nyiko another way. The first evil above condemned murder by witchcraft and the "magic" art (dzoduame). How witchcraft and dzodsasa are frowned upon! When a youth (or his lineage) seeks the hand of a girl in marriage, the first duty of the girl's lineage is to examine meticulously if there are cases of adze (witchcraft) or dzoduame in the lineage. If the evidences<sup>17</sup> are established, <sup>71</sup>they constitute an immediate and final bar to marriage. Thus the lineage that is indifferent to the practice of adze and dzoduame kills off itself, for lineage (patrilineage) endogamy is frowned upon and incest invites social opprobrium.

Among the Anloawo, clan endogamy is encouraged and lineage exogamy is rigidly the rule. Cross-cousin marriage especially between the father's sister's daughter and mother's brother's son (tasivi-nyruivi) is encouraged. The levirate is acceptable, but the sororate implying the marriage of two living sisters is rigidly frowned upon; the latter is sometimes regarded as incestuous.

The mention of incest suggests another analytic point for our ritualised system of law enforcement. The six rules above make no mention of incest or other forms of sexual offences. Indeed sexual offences, other than meddling with another's wife, even though frowned upon and dealt with in their social contexts, do not carry as much weight of supernatural sanctions as among the Ashanti.<sup>(1)</sup>

Among the Anloawo, sexual offences are punished or discouraged/

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1. See Busia, The Position of the Chief, London, 1951 chapter IV (pp.65 and ff.)



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discouraged more by moral coercion than by supernatural sanction. Barbara Ward suggests that this may be connected with patriliney in Anlo, as distinct from matriliney in Ashanti.<sup>(1)</sup>

Finally, in this ritual (Nyiko), we have evidence of the legal status of the Awadada as the "Chief-Justice" of the "bench" (The Council of Elders). He approves and directs the "execution" of the nation's worst criminals. This is an additional sanction for his office.

In this section we have examined the Nyiko custom as a supernatural sanction and as an important arm of the "judiciary" in the maintenance of law and order. Though a supernatural sanction, Nyiko more or less provides a case of indirect supernatural retribution; that is both mortals and the supernaturals co-operate to bring a delinquent member to book. In the next section we shall examine the whole field of ritual proscription of crime, or the means by which society enforces compliance with the group norms.

#### (4)

#### RITUAL VALUES.

Nyiko provides the basis for a broader view of sanctioned custom or the socially approved norms obtaining in Anlo, and especially of the drives or incentives making for conformity.

Evidently, every society emphasises certain forms of conduct which it considers right behaviour. This right behaviour may be upheld by religion, by public esteem, and disapproval, by the balanced advantages inherent in reciprocal relationships and by/

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1. See her unpublished thesis on Ewe Social Organisation, Chapter 3.

by legal compulsion and punishment.<sup>(1)</sup>

Among the Anloawo sanctioned custom is largely upheld by "satirical sanction" or community disapproval, punishment and religious values. But the last of these categories - religious values - underlies the others and thus gives sanctioned custom as a whole the semblance of 'ritual value'. By 'ritual value' I follow Radcliffe-Brown in meaning that which is the object of ritual avoidance or taboo.<sup>(2)</sup> It is in this sense that the Nyiko prohibitions, though in the nature of legal compulsion, are also 'ritual avoidances'. Though they serve purely social ends, they are geared to certain magico-religious concepts. Conformity to the norms is regarded as pleasing to the gods or the spirits, or establishing desirable relations with them. Conversely, infringement is regarded as displeasing to them or destroying desirable harmonious relations with them.<sup>(3)</sup> Adultery is wrong not because it infringes the sexual rights of another but because it contravenes an established taboo; and a taboo as a 'ritual value' is enforceable by the gods themselves.

Or take, for example, the famed Nyigbla taboo which prohibited the wearing of European clothes or 'loose robes' in and around Anloga. It was generally believed that this religious decree or ritual prohibition originated from Nyigbla himself because he or his Chief priest wore such clothes. On closer examination, however, /

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1. Godfrey Wilson, "An African Morality", Africa Vol.IX (1936) pp.75-99.
  2. Radcliffe-Brown, "Taboo", Structure and Function in Primitive Society, London, 1952, p.193.
  3. Ibid, "Social Sanctions", Structure and Function p.206.

however, the taboo is found to have a social origin, and is directed to the avoidance of a specific crime. It has been linked to the national deity in order to ensure maximum compliance: The following legend accounts for the connection: a wealthy trader of Anloga, Anyage by name,<sup>(1)</sup> was robbed or dispossessed of his cattle while he was away on one of his trading expeditions. On his return home after a long absence, his mother who acted as caretaker reported the theft. He demanded immediate restitution from the freebooters, which he never had. He appealed to the national council for justice and a day was set aside for hearing. Perhaps sceptical of a fair deal, he concealed a dagger in his robes during the hearing. In the midst of the trial, Anyage was overcome by anger and reaching for his dagger, he butchered to death scores of the accused and judges, and fled. It was a national catastrophe. To avoid repetition of such an incident a law was promulgated prohibiting the wearing of clothes.<sup>(2)</sup> Later, on the introduction of Nyigbla as a national deity, this law was linked to it (Nyigbla) and thus became reinforced as a 'ritual avoidance'.

It can be similarly shown that on the lineage level, a number of avoidances such as shaving (or having a haircut) at night, sweeping at night, spitting on the threshold, menstruation avoidances, regulations on sexual intercourse, mortuary observances and food taboos have their social significance, and many in fact have/

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1. Anyage is a well-known legendary character in Anlo mythology.
  2. This would apply to habiliments other than the local 'toga', the understanding being that weapons concealed in the former might be less easily detected.

have originated from this. They may entail questions of personal hygiene or the safety of the community. But once these "social values" take on "ritual value" one can be fairly certain that they will be most rigidly observed, for a breach is punishable by the gods themselves. Where human agents exact the penalty for the breach of a ritual prohibition, they do so as the mundane agents of the gods, or from a sense of ritual obligation. Whether the gods intervene directly or indirectly, there is retribution of one kind or the other, emphasising the point that crime or misconduct does not pay. Thus the fear of the supernatural consequences of the breach of sanctioned custom conduces to good behaviour or the observance of the moral code. Conversely, misfortune or unhappiness may be traced to supernatural displeasure.

There is another side to the observance of the moral code. In Nyiko, we observed that the lineage felt it its responsibility to surrender its own criminals, for the sin of a member was believed shared by the lineage as a whole. Where ritual expiation or atonement is involved, it is the lineage as a whole which suffers economic and social privations. This attaches extra value of a negative kind to individual guilt.

It will be almost impossible to examine the thousand and one "public" and "private delicts" - to use Radcliffe-Brown's terminology - of a ritual character, obtaining in Anlo. It will suffice to delineate the main categories and briefly explain the processes involved.

Following the discussion as above, we may classify "ritual values/

values" or supernatural sanctions into two main categories:

- (i) Ritual Values operating through human agencies.
- (ii) Spontaneous ritual values.

We shall examine these categories briefly

(i) Ritual values through human agencies: here we discuss a few specific items.

(a) Aka-divination or the ordeal: the principle underlying Akadodo (ordeal) is that where men fail, the gods are infallible in their justice. Though the primary function is to test the innocence or guilt of an accused, it has far-reaching implications. Akametsitsi (accusation by Aka) is one of the worst humiliations that may befall any man. Because the social disgrace involved extends beyond the accused to his family, a man denying responsibility for a crime would be admonished by members of his own family, prior to the ordeal, to think twice and not bring home disgrace to his kinsfolk. It is in this sense that aka has considerable deterrent effect on the commission of crime.

In the more general sense, this principle of supernatural detection of crime functions in ordinary social intercourse to weed out the malevolent members of the community. Most ceremonies such as the installation of a chief, the ritual washing of a stool include a ritual feast. There is food for all comers, but those who have secretly committed murder by witchcraft or the use of charms partake of the feast at the risk of their own lives. The stomach of such a criminal becomes inordinately swollen or distended, and/



and unless he confesses and is given a fla (ritual expiation) he dies. This magical effect derives from the fact that the meat with which the stew is prepared has been deliberately brought into contact with the ancestral stool. During the Nyigbla periodic rites, all wells or sources of water-supply are deliberately polluted with a black powdered herb (tsi). The object is to detect criminals in the State, for it is believed that murderers die on drinking polluted water during the rites. By these devices and others of their kind, crime was ritually proscribed.

(b) Fiasidixexe: Closely related to the ordeal but probably more exacting is the custom of fiasidixexe, a sort of penal servitude by which a criminal is bonded to serve for life in a cult house in atonement for his crime.

In lieu of deciding guilt or innocence by simple ordeal, where the gravity of the offence warrants it, one of the "convent cults" (troxoviwo, lit. cults which take in children) may be sworn.<sup>(1)</sup> Where perjury is established by the god concerned, the person involved engages in what is known as fiasidixexe or ritual expiation. He enters the cult house and dedicates himself to the service of the cult as a cult servant. If he dies in service, it is the responsibility of his family to make replacement. If the original crime is murder, his life may be claimed immediately by the cult, but the family responsibility to the cult remains unchanged. The understanding is that the family has entered into a perpetual covenant with the cult to the effect that a member of the lineage shall/

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1. The Writer is acquainted with only three "convent cults" or troxoviwo; these are Tomi, Sui and Kotsi.

shall always be in attendance. Negligence in this ritual obligation is visited continuously with death in the family until the contract is honoured again. Fiasidi thus poses a grave threat to the survival of members of a family; it may even cause the extinction of a whole family. The severity of this form of atonement is enough to restrict, if not deter recourse to fiasidi. It is an effective means of the ritual proscription of crime.

(c) The use of Charms: We have already discussed the variety of charms, their merits and demerits.<sup>(1)</sup> Almost any charm may serve both protective and destructive ends. In the latter instance, it may serve as a legal redress for a legitimate grievance. There is a specific case of aza which is believed manipulated by the troxoviwo ("convent cults") to bring to heel defaulters i.e. those mothers who have failed to honour their pledges to surrender to the cult children born in answer to prayer. There is the nudo (charm) by which personal and communal properties are safeguarded from freebooters. These and others of their type instill in members of the community respect for the rights of others, and therefore of the norms obtaining in the society. Functioning in this capacity, charms constitute effective supernatural deterrents to crime.

(ii) Spontaneous "ritual values": This is the sphere of direct or automatic retribution. Sickness in the lineage, misfortune, death may be traced by diviners to the displeasure of the ancestral/

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1. See Chapter 3.

ancestral spirits or the anger of the trowo. An epidemic affecting the community may be traced to the vengeance of the community deity. Specific disabilities may be traced to disregard of recognised taboo or prohibitions, as for example, clan taboo, certain sexual offences, cult prohibitions. The nature of the penalty determines the kind of guilt. Below is a schematic representation of clans, their taboos and attendant retribution:

<u>Clan.</u>	<u>Taboo.</u>	<u>Penalty.</u>
Lafe	Should not kill the alligator ( <u>ve</u> )	Death
Dzovia	<u>Klofui</u> or <u>dzovia</u> (fish) not eaten	Rashes leading to death.
Bate	Should not kill the tiger.	Loose tongue (impairing speech)
Tovia	<u>To</u> (local plant) not <del>be</del> used for firewood.	Death.
Dzevia	Should not eat fresh or 'unprocessed' salt (kevimedze)	Death
Like	Should not eat saw-fish ( <u>nyanyake</u> )	Madness or death
Klevia	1. Should not handle the bird known as <u>klevor</u> 2. Should not use <u>kle</u> , a kind of net woven from a local creeping plant	Death
Gave	Atsia (cashew tree) not used for firewood	Impotence, madness, death.
Mlade	<u>Gbeno</u> (species of local herb) not used for domestic purposes	Death

Each clan taboo has its origins in elaborate mythology handed down by the clan ancestor. This belief reinforces group adherence and contributes to group identity.

Supernatural sanctions on a national scale are manifest in epidemics or threats of epidemics. In the course of the rites of expiation, all the tro-priests of the territorial-political public cults co-operate in enjoining certain prohibitions or rigidly enforcing already existing prohibitions. The whole period calls for a collective examination of the national conscience, for an epidemic is an expression of the displeasure of the national deity or deities. The following is a brief descriptive account of the rites of dodede (lit. removing sickness or an epidemic) as normally initiated from Atiteti, the south-western extremity of the Anlo State.

Unless it is a question of emergency, dodede must be initiated on a day in February (agblex | eti adre). On the appointed day, the inhabitants of Dzita join forces with those at Atiteti (litoral villages in the West). Here, a large mound in the shape of an idol is raised, to which is offered ludza (maize flour soaked in water). A rifle is fired twice and this starts off the rites. The villagers collect all the refuse in town and dump this before the public village idols.<sup>(1)</sup> Then the group proceeds to the next village where the process is repeated. Members of the new village carry the rites to the next, and on and on it goes until the whole State has been covered.

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1. The refuse may be burnt up later.

An important feature of the rites is the offering to the gods. During the rites in the village wandering goats and chickens are freely caught and slaughtered for the preparation of a red meal (dzeekple). Some of this is offered to the gods and the rest feasted upon.

The chiefs or elders consult the bokonowo (diviners) to ascertain whether the offerings have been accepted. If they are, the subsidiary rites of afekpokplo (lit. sweeping the house) follow upon dodede. This entails the actual elimination of sickness or epidemic from town. In practice, this is nothing short of communal house-cleaning, when members of the community help in cleaning each other's homes and dumping the refuse at the public dung-hill.

Afekpokplo is followed by the burning of incense (or the local herb ayida) through the night. Early the next morning a pacification ceremony is gone through by the bokowo and priests. This (flawuwu) entails the sprinkling of a special herbal concoction through the town or village. The gods are believed appeased and sooner or later they withdraw their messengers of wrath.<sup>(1)</sup>

In this section we have examined the whole problem of the ritual proscription of crime or the means by which society enforces compliance with the group norms.

(5)

#### RITUAL IN THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF LIFE.

In Anlo, we have a specimen of hard working Africans who, /

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1. Dodede was last performed on a national scale twelve years ago.



who, in places, have to eke out a living. The sandy salt, parched soil of the littoral, does not support agriculture well enough. The laterite of Penyi and Dzodze, Avenor, Abor, is a trifle better; but even this does not compare favourably with northern Eweland. It is here that those who insist on farming realise beyond the shadow of a doubt, that they are fighting against odds, and that they cannot depend solely on their own brawn and sinews. Great issues are at stake and mistakes may be too costly! Herein is the case for the invocation of supernatural aid in the prospering of their shallot (onion) and cassava beds. To ensure reasonable harvest mechanical rules of a ritual sort must be followed with almost magical precision.

In varying degrees, other occupations, especially those of the dangerous sort, or ones in which much is at stake, follow prescribed ritual. In this section, therefore, we observe some aspects of ritual connected with some of the economic pursuits of this area.

### FARMING

Farm ritual is of two sorts: individual and collective. Unlike the smiths and the fishermen in a community, no farmers engage in the collective worship of a tro to prosper farming. The individual depends upon his own "magic" and the goodwill of his ancestors who have some stake in a good and plentiful harvest.

Just before he breaks <sup>the</sup> ground, he pours libation in the field inviting the ancestors to watch over his field, and at the same time, making the solemn promise to feed the ancestors or five/

give them their due, should they reward him with a successful harvest. When the harvest season is around, he redeems his promise with ancestral or stool rites which are such constant features of the months of July, August and September.<sup>(1)</sup>

But the ancestors are not the only guardians. To exercise the hostile powers of rival farmers, or neighbours, he may purchase a vodu or akpase (the protective aspect of witchcraft).<sup>(2)</sup> He may make periodic sacrificial offerings to his lineage or personal trowo. All these have a part to play in the prospering of his farm, for the more the protective guardians, the greater the insurance against risks. All these are personal and individual and lack the social elements of collective farming. It is in the collective ritual that we find these social elements.

We have noted above that farmers in a community do not engage in the collective worship of a tro to prosper farming; but it must be remembered that most of the du trowo (or public trowo) are fertility trowo ensuring general productivity, the normal supply of rain, adequate food-supply and the general welfare of the village. Naturally they cater for the interests of farmers and farming. When there is drought, farming is poor and food prices soar, it is symptomatic of the anger of the du trowo who in their anger have allowed evil spirits/

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1. Refer to ancestral rites in Chapter 4, section 3.
  2. See Ritual Specialists in Section 7 of Chapter 3.

spirits to over-run the land; they must be forthwith appeased and the evil expelled. In an agricultural community, such rites may be performed periodically and more intimately linked with farming. Penyi, an inland farming community provides an excellent example.

Aka and Gadze are the leading male and female du trowo of the Penyi unit. Annual rites - between March and April - are performed to appease the twin gods and to ensure the normal agricultural harvests. The rites normally precede the breaking of ground.

On this occasion, Ayisa the tro-priest, informs the trohoviawo (the patrilineal descendants of the great-grandfather who brought over the tro from Notsie) of his intentions to make offerings to grandfather and grandmother - Aka and Gadze. Baskets of maize are collected and allowed to ferment; maize beer is later brewed. Palm drink is provided from the farm of the tro-priest-in-charge. (Nowadays it is customary to include some amount of gin or the native alcohol i.e. kele or akpetesi). The three types of drink are offered to the twin-gods and the rest drunk by the trohoviawo.

In the evening, a black goat and a white fowl are provided. These are confined by a tether made out of palm frond (desa). When prayers are offered at the shrine, the tro-priest and the cult-servants begin their nocturnal assignment. With the palm fronds securely tied in a noose around the neck of the goat and the fowl, the priest and cult-servants parade the/

the whole town, the alleys and by-ways, amidst the clanging of iron bars (awaga) and the singing of Aka and Gadze songs. All is silent in the compounds. The goat and fowl bleat and cackle breathlessly as they are dragged along the ground. In the early hours of the morning the dead goat and bird are removed and hung on a tree by a lane leading out of the town. They are allowed to rot on the tree for a few days. As they rot, the inhabitants take consolation that the land has been exorcised of evil spirits.

Normally, before the rites, there is a ban on noise in any form: the firing of muskets, shrill cries, the beating of drums (of any kind), sweeping with the hard end broom (made of the centres of coconut palm leaves) are banned. Such ban may last between 14-30 days, depending on how soon the "all clear" signal issues from Aka and Gadze. When farm work begins, every fourth day (Denu-Xi market day) must be observed as a day of rest; it is sacred to Aka and Gadze; no farm work is done.

When it is harvest and the maize and tubers are ready, no one is privileged to carry home the farm products until the Harvest-Home tro rites which wind up with all farmers taking part in clearing a path from the farm to the home. This is an occasion of feasts and jubilation. The harvest comes home, but what is more important still, it comes home free of illness or disease. The ancestral rites follow close upon these Harvest Home rites.

These pre-farming and post Harvest Home rites, whatever else they may express, impress us with man's understanding of/

of, and dependence upon, supernatural powers in nature.

### FISHING:

All rivers and lagoons in Anlo are fished but sea-fishing is by far the most important source of fish. It is also the most hazardous and the one most deeply immersed in ritual. In the following paragraphs we discuss the ritual connected with sea fishing.

Like agriculture, in communities where fishing is the primary occupation or a secondary occupation of great importance, some of the du trowo are labelled fishing trowo and their worship is directed to that end. Fungo and Bakpotoe<sup>(1)</sup> at Woe (8 miles from Keta) are examples.

Just before the fishing season, a day is set aside by common agreement among the fishermen for rites and ceremonies that will initiate fishing in the community. The Priest of the fishing tro in the community is in charge. All fishing boats are assessed at five shillings per boat.<sup>(2)</sup> With this money, the priest, with the assistance of the cult-servants, provides/

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1. In recent Bakpotoe rites at Woe, both Christians and Pagan fishermen were assessed. Information reached the local Protestant Pastor who raised objection to Christians being forced to subscribe to pagan rites. The simple explanation of the pagan fishermen was that Bakpotoe did not discriminate between pagans and Christians of the community in conferring fishing Benefits.
  2. In communities where fishing boats are few the entire community may be assessed at penny, three-pence or six-pence per head.



provides a goat, fowls, firewood, palm oil and drinks. A red meal (dzeekple) is cooked. The priest makes an offering to the tro by sprinkling some of the meal along the beach and pouring out a glass of gin (or any alcoholic drink). When the fishermen have had their fill, they ritually wipe their hands on the fishing nets (seine). A ban on fishing is announced. This may last a couple of days or longer, according to the discretion of the priest-in-charge.

It is only after this communal ceremony that the individual rites begin. The owner of the net may appeal to his private or lineage tro or to his ancestor to prosper the season's fishing enterprise.

If in spite of the rites - communal and individual - fishing continues progressively poor, the various fishing companies put heads together and decide on an appeal to Awleketi, the Yewe sea tro. This is the final resort.

A cow is bought by the fishing companies and the services of the local Yewe priest and cult-servants sought. On a Saturday or Wednesday, all the Yewe followers in the community become possessed, and in the state of possession, the cow is securely tied up and taken far out to sea, as far as the horizon. In the words of the informant, 'this is a very dangerous trip'. At a point believed to be the home of Awleketi, maize flour is sprinkled over the sea and the tro is invoked. Awleketi's response is marked by the sudden leaping and flapping of fish all around the boat. The cow is untied and tossed back and forth six times, and on the seventh, is dumped alive into/

into the sea.

According to the information, one of two things may follow: the cow may sink to the bottom or re-emerge and swim ashore. When it does swim ashore, Yewe followers are convinced that the sacrificial animal has not been accepted and the process is repeated another day with a new animal.

On return to shore, fishing is banned for fourteen days. When the ban is lifted and boats fly out to sea in great hurry, fishing is brisk once more and there are the usual welcome smiles on the faces of all fishermen. In appreciation of the services of Yewe, followers are privileged to go round the nets on the first day of fishing after the ban, collecting as much fish as they can carry home.

In fishing, like agriculture, ritual expresses man's dependence on powers superior to his. When fishing is poor, and the means of sustenance diminished, then the trowo step in in response to human supplications and re-establish social equilibrium.

#### IRON-WORKING:

Of the important crafts, iron-working or blacksmithing in particular, is fully governed by elaborate rules and ritual sanctions. This is a closed shop industry.

All smiths (gblawo) belong to a single cult and are prohibited from active membership of other cults. Theirs is the worship of Wanyevi, otherwise known as Asimatsonu. Members of the cult are, essentially, patrilineal descendants of the grandfathers/

grandfathers who brought the tro over from Notsie. Naturally, the craft is patrilineally inherited.

In form, Wanyevi is a piece of iron bar in an earthenware (sonugba) filled with water. He recruits followers according to the needs of the community. A young man, untrained in the iron-working art, is seized with an uncontrollable desire to handle and to mould iron. He thrusts a piece of iron into the kitchen fire and begins to mould without instruction. The elders of the family watch him a couple of days in his restless state and declare, 'Wanyevi le devia' i.e., this youth has been recruited by Wanyevi. He is thereupon escorted to the tro priests where he is given an ablution with water from an earthen plate. A long list of taboos is enjoined and he is declared a member of the cult. The taboos include the avoidance of food roasted from an earthen plate (similar to one from which he has had his ablution), bathing or drinking boiled water from an (enamel or) iron pan.

Three days later, the tro priest or the chief Smith opens a smithy or a forge for the recruit. His anvil is presented him seven times and then set on a plank. He is now a fully-fledged master Smith; he can cast iron into any shape or form that he dreams of doing. Wanyevi will always be there to lend a helping hand. In fact, Wanyevi himself merely employs his mortal hands as agents in the fashioning of tools.

But, to achieve this measure of success in his new occupation, /

occupation, the initiate must play the game according to rules. Every fourth day is sacred to Wanyevi and all the forges must be closed. Offerings of a minor sort may be made on the sacred day. There must be no visits to the shop after a night of sexual intercourse. To do so is to incur supernatural displeasure, the consequences of which may be grave. All these, besides the taboo handed down by the tro priest must be meticulously observed.

Ordinarily, gblawo - followers of Wanyevi - engage in no other economic pursuits. Theirs is a self-supporting craft; self-supporting in the sense that there is a ritual exchange of hoes and cutlasses with food and the other necessities of life.<sup>(1)</sup>

At the annual Wanyevi rites when all the Smiths turn up, fowls (black and white) palm oil, maize flour are provided for a feast with the tro. During the rites, all the available gu-iron/implements fashioned by Gblawo - are brought over for consecration by the tro.<sup>(2)</sup>

1. In practice, this economic specialisation was not meticulously adhered to. This was no supernatural injunction and Smiths serving as part-time farmers or fishermen were not unusual.
2. Ritual or religious ceremonial connected with blacksmithing is known in most parts of West Africa. Among the Peki (Northern Ewe-speaking people), Spieth mentions Zu as the equivalent of Wanyevi or Gu. In olden times, new yam was eaten in honour of Zu, and for no other tro. In Dahomey, Herskovits writes of Gu, the god of iron, representing one of the principal forces in the world of help to man. "He is the special deity of all iron-workers who are under his protection" (Dahomey, Vol.11 page 105). When a new anvil is put into place, it is an occasion both for religious ceremonial and general jollification among the iron-workers.

In iron working, we have yet another example of how the supernaturals take a hand in directing the economic affairs of the Anloawo.

(6)

#### MORTUARY RITES.

In what Van Gennep has labelled the "rites de passage"<sup>(1)</sup> we come to grips with ritualised behaviour focussing on the life of the individual. These include rites practised at birth, puberty, marriage and death. In this section, we deal with the mortuary rites which in the life-cycle of the individual enter so deeply into the realm of the sacred.

When a person dies, a pit is dug in the bathroom or an enclosure within the compound. The corpse is laid across the pit. This is the time to keep members of the lineage informed and also making public announcement of death.<sup>(2)</sup>

From the relatives four are selected - two men and two women - from the clan groups of both parents<sup>(3)</sup> of the deceased and entrusted with the task of washing the corpse. The corpse/

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1. See M. Arnold Van Gennep, Les Rites de Passage, Paris, 1909.
  2. Chiefs are an exception. No public announcement of death is made until after the secret burial of the corpse.
  3. Both parents may or may not belong to the same clan group - clan endogamy is preferred but not obligatory.

corpse is shaved of all hair and nails. Then follows a ritual fetching of water by members of father and mother's clans - Hlotsidudu. This is a ritual acknowledgment of responsibility for the dead by members of both clans.

When the corpse is washed and dressed (in funeral clothes), representatives of both clans make ritual offerings of cloth. This is to kple no vo i.e. mother and father's gift in cloth. Similar offerings are made by the spouse or affines and the children or parents of the deceased, if they are available.<sup>(1)</sup> This is known as loho vo and vi vo respectively. The corpse is bundled in cloths and mats. Just before the bundling which is witnessed by a select few (males) cowrie shells are placed near the corpse so the spirit is enabled to pay for its fare and food on the journey to tsiefe, the spirit world. When the group re-enters, there is a ritual offering of drink which is poured at the head of the bundle with the following words:

You were suddenly called off. We are unable to fathom the cause of this hasty exit. If it is the machination of an evil power prompted by a mortal, then this is vengeance-drink I offer you. Accept and declare the perpetrator of this (dastardly) crime.

Such a drink is offered by representatives of both father/

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1. Today, the custom persists, though it has partially lost its significance in coffin-burial. Originally, such cloths served mostly for shroud but also as gift for the journey to the spirit world.



father and mother's clans. There is a second round of offering in which the intimate friends of the deceased join. The message at this time is as follows:

"Menye nyee gbe wo o, woe gbem. Aha si mikpli wo mienona eyae nye si. Gake fifia mikpli wo miekla sha"<sup>(1)</sup>

The first offering is clearly to incite the spirit of the deceased to vengeance (on the murderer), natural death being a rare phenomenon. The second is intended for a farewell and the complete severance of ties with the spirit of the deceased.

The corpse is now ready to be borne to the grave which may be behind the compound or within it. If death is traced to a suspect in the community, the lineage may resort to the custom of agbatsotso (lit load carrying). This is the equivalent of the Ashanti "funu soa" i.e. "carrying the corpse".<sup>(2)</sup> By this custom the spirit of the dead man is implored to assist the living in identifying the person responsible for the death. This the spirit does by causing the carrier of the corpse to knock against the suspect or enter his house. The person/

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1. This translates as follows: I have not denounced you; you have turned your back on me. This is your share of the drink we have so often had together. But now, this is the end of our friendly, convivial bouts; we have parted company.
  2. See Rattray's Religion and Art in Ashanti Chapter XV (pp.165 & ff).

person is arrested and if he denies responsibility is put through an ordeal by the Aka diviner.<sup>(1)</sup> If agbatsotso fails to detect the criminal, recourse may be had to the amegasiwo (diviners) or the noliyolawo (necromancers) who are able to invoke the spirit to come back to earth to speak on its death.

At the grave more gifts may be presented. Since the announcement of death, drumming and dancing has been continuous. Drummers and dancers keep the vigil, and lead the procession to the grave.

The Anloawo distinguish between good and bad deaths. Bad deaths include death from snake-bite or other wounds, suicide, drowning, death in childbirth or by execution for a certain crime.<sup>(2)</sup> Those who die bad deaths are buried outside the village.

Now, a few days after burial - between four and seven days - depending on the clan membership of the deceased - libations are poured at the grave by representatives of the parental clans of the deceased. Relatives - paternal and maternal - friends and well-wishers assemble in the home of the deceased to pay for the funeral expenses incurred. The day is Yofogbe and the custom is Yofofo.

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1. If guilt is confirmed, such a person may die the Nyiko death (explained above), or the lineage of the deceased may secretly avenge the death.
  2. Spieth, Die Religion der Eweer in Sud Togo, Göttingen, 1911 p.233.

If the deceased has been survived by a widow or widows, mourning rites (ahowowo) begin a month or two after burial. On the day following a market day, the widow is seized and confined for eight days - 4 in the inner chamber and 4 in the outer courts - by two elderly women - one from the clan of the deceased and the other from the clan of the living spouse - who themselves are widows or have been widows. On the ninth day, she is escorted to the beach where she is given a close shave on the head to remove the 'evil hair'. Her old clothes are exchanged for new black clothes - the mourning clothes (weeds). As she is escorted back home she puts each hand across the opposite shoulder in deep and solemn meditation.

For the next sixteen months, she has virtually no company beyond the members of the household. She withdraws active membership from all the drumming societies of which she is a member. Between now and the termination of the mourning rites, 16 months later, she must work hard to provide herself with a new trousseau (outfit).

At the end of the 16th month and the beginning of the 17th, the termination of mourning rites - ahotsilele - are held, once more, at the beach. After prayers and rites of cleansing, the widow throws herself into the sea (keeping quite close to the shore). A widow who has had sex relations during the period of mourning may be swiftly drowned.<sup>(1)</sup>

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1. Instead of bathing in the sea a woman may ask for a pail of sea-water for the purpose of cleansing ashore. Unless she is infirm, this is interpreted as an act of confession of unchastity during the period of mourning.

Drowning may have a more dangerous significance: it may mean that the widow has encompassed the death of her husband.

Having been thus ritually cleansed in the sea, the widow throws aside her weeds (black garments) and dons new clothes. In fact, everything on her person, including the underclothes must be new things she has purchased by her own labour during the period of mourning. The old clothes may be carried away by the women responsible for the rites.

Men (widowers) are not customarily required to undergo mourning rites. However, token rites performed in expression of sorrow at parting with their spouses include confinement for four days and immediate ritual cleansing at the sea-shore.

Mourning rites play an important part on the destiny of the spirit of the deceased and the life of a living spouse. According to the customary beliefs, unless such rites are performed, the spirit in the spirit world is forced to lead an unhappy bachelor existence. It cannot re-marry unless the rites have been gone through with the living spouse. In this unhappy state it augurs ill for the living spouse and her kin. Conversely, the widow who has not completed the rites may not remarry without incurring strong supernatural disfavour.

Now let us examine the function of significant aspects of these mortuary rites. Throughout the burial rites, mention has been made of the role of the parental clans, i.e., father and mother's clans, of the deceased; both clans cooperate in the washing of the corpse and are both represented in the final rites of drink offering and farewell gifts. This emphasizes/

emphasizes two points: first, the conception of the clan (hlo) as a kin group; secondly, the full conception of kinship (fomedodo) as embracing paternal and maternal relatives, i.e., the patrilineal descent group and close relatives on the mother's side. As earlier indicated in this chapter, the clan is recognised as a wider group of patrilineal kin. Though the claim to descent from a common patrilineal ancestor may not be substantiated in fact, nevertheless, members of the group behave as kinsmen, especially in discharging ritual obligations. Transcending the patrilineal descent group is the 'bi-lineage' which embraces the patrilineage and members of the mother's lineage. Residence is patrilocal and descent patrilineal, but a man may acquire properties from both sides of the family and make offerings to the ancestors of both paternal and maternal kin. The classificatory term novi is applicable to both members of the patrilineage and the mother's patrilineage of Ego's generation.<sup>(1)</sup>

Mortuary rites, in general, offer satisfactions of a psychological sort. The sight of a beautifully dressed corpse lying in bed as though asleep, offers some sort of a relief to one's agonising anguish.<sup>(2)</sup>

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1. The importance attached to one's mother and her lineage is sometimes expressed by the statement no to wu, implying that mother or mother's lineage is more important though this is not borne out by actual fact. This may have reference to a time when an uncle (maternal) had legal rights over the life of his nephew, and the nephew in turn inherited substantially from a deceased uncle, in spite of a patrilineal system of inheritance.
  2. This seems to be the idea of America also as expressed in the importance attached to the role of the mortician.

But it also gives the bereaved family an opportunity to exhibit family wealth, raise the status of the family and so compensate the loss of a functioning member of the unit, even if that feeling of compensation is but transitory.

(7)

KINSHIP and MARRIAGE in RELATION to the  
SUPERNATURAL ORDER.

In the preceding paragraphs of this chapter, a number of references have been made to supernatural sanctions for the institutions of kinship and marriage. In this section, we examine one more aspect of the subject, the father's sister in kinship organisation.

Probably the most important single person of enormous ritual significance, in the lineage, is the father's sister. In marriage rites, she is indispensable; her curse (on a nephew or niece) can only be expiated ritually. Even when no curse is involved, she may be held responsible for the failure in life of a brother's child and ritual offerings must be made in atonement. This ritual importance of the aunt finds validation in a number of myths.

According to one of the myths, in the distant past, before the stabilisation of marriage as an institution men had only concubines who tolerated them for as long as their whims and caprices endured companionship. At the slightest provocation from the man, the paramour was received back into her family compound. This jeopardised the stability of the family. In disgust the father's sister handed over to her brother's son a daughter, and charged her to make a permanent home in her/



her cousin's and never to quit it. This was the beginning of the stabilisation of marriage

This is only a myth, but it has its sociological significance. It offers an explanation or finds ritual sanctions for a social reality, the preferred tasivinyruivi (lit. one who calls me aunt - one who calls me uncle) marriage i.e. cross-cousin marriage. This is the ideal form of exogamous marriage; it is enjoined by society because of its several advantages: it is a pome (bi-lineage) marriage and rarely ends in divorce; it also has the partial advantage of conserving in the lineage, wealth and service which might normally have gone to another lineage in the maintenance of a mother-in-law.

Again, in marriage, the father's sisters are instrumental another way. In the marriage of a brother's son, we see the fathers' sisters of both prospective bride and groom playing the leading role as representatives of their respective patri-lineages. The father sends his sister to the home of the prospective bride's parents in the preliminary enquiries. The amount of bride-wealth is arranged by them; the determination or ascertainment of the chastity of the bride, and the actual handing-over must be performed or superintended by the fathers' sisters.

This part of the father's sister in the marriage ceremony of her brother's son is no mere acknowledgment of her social importance in the lineage. The whole marriage is a ritual and the part she plays has ritual significance, for the belief/

belief is held that her active participation is a boon to the marriage and the married couple. In the absence of a true aunt, the woman who plays this role is normally regarded as deputising for the aunt.

In view of these lineage responsibilities in respect of a brother's child, an aunt is much respected; but she is also feared not because she is father's sister, or mother-in-law, but because she has the aunt's curse.

To be cursed by an aunt is to meet with failure in life. The curse has a supernatural sanction and can only be expiated ritually, by the offering of drinks and the public revocation of the curse.

In yet another circumstance, a brother's child meets with failure which is not directly attributable to a living aunt's curse. Such a failure is normally regarded as a curse from the nolime tasi (lit. ghost aunt) in the spirit world. Promptly, the child makes ritual offerings of drinks and money to the aunts which act is interpreted as in fulfilment of a promise made in the spirit world.

This leads us to an aspect of the world view of the Anlo. According to this aspect of the world view, life on earth is believed to be a continuation of the spirit life. To make it a success, it must find a neat correspondence with the spirit life. Just as the soul in the spirit world has a spouse, so has it a spirit aunt (nolime tasi). It is significant that no mention is made of a spirit mother or father). It devolves on the nolime tasi to play the role of a/  
a/

a father and mother to the soul. Just before its exit from the spirit world, the soul is admonished to be of good behaviour and a credit to the tasi (aunt), and is warned of a curse, should it disregard those admonitions. In response, the soul promises obedience and pledges a part of his acquisitions in life, in expression of gratitude.

Obviously, in these ritual offerings, we find a ritual sanction for the social responsibility of Ego towards his father's sister and or mother-in-law, whichever applies. This is, in effect, a correspondence between the social reality and ritual obligations.

A brief examination of aspects of the kinship structure will corroborate the ritual evidence.

The virilocal residence acknowledged here implies that both mother and children reside with the father's lineage. As long as the marriage survives, the child remains in the patrilineal compound where it is directly under the aegis of the father's sisters. And there may be quite a few around: young unmarried sisters are here in their father's compound, and therefore with their brothers. Divorcees and elderly widows return to their father's compound.

The brother's wife in the compound has respect for the husband's sisters. She calls them sronyega or sronyedia. The first term (sronyega) is literally 'older husband' and applies to an elder sister of the husband. The second term, sronyedia is literally 'younger husband' and applies to a younger sister of the husband.

This/

This inclusion of the husband and sisters in the same terminological category implies similarity in attitude and behaviour towards them. There is no avoidance, but the attitude is one of respect and service, which attitude is directly imbibed by her child. The child looks up to the aunt with the same filial regard accorded the father. When he grows up, he may make gifts or render service to the aunt, not necessarily out of affection, but from a sense of undefined obligation.

Among the Mende where the mother's brother appears to have enormous ritual authority over the sister's son, Dr. Little explains how this ritual role is rationalised: among other things, he states that "the Mende consider that since a brother and sister come from the same father they may be regarded as one. Therefore, all that a mother gives her child is given also by her brother, and so her brother's pleasure or displeasure is the same as her own".<sup>(1)</sup> As we have observed, the equivalent ritual role of the mother's brother (among the Mende) is played by the father's sister among the Anloawo. While the Anloawo are not quite specific in the rationalisation of this ritual role, the Mende ideas may be quite relevant here as well. By applying the same term to both husband and his sisters, the wife implies that they are one, and that a father's gift to his son is equally an aunt's (father's/

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1. "The Mende in Sierra Leone", African Worlds, p.122

(father's sister's) gift.<sup>(1)</sup>

In this chapter we have examined the correspondence between religion (ritual) and the constitution of the Anlo social organisation. Ritual supports and validates the authority of leaders on the kinship level, the regional-political level and on the military plane. In the economic aspects of life, men depend on supernatural powers to canalize and supplement their matter-of-fact knowledge in farming, fishing, crafts and trade. In the life of the individual there is almost no distinction between the realms of the "sacred" and the "profane". In his "rites de passage", his intricate and complex behaviour is dictated by ritual. This is particularly true of the period of death and the associated mortuary rites. Finally, in kinship and marriage, we find a ritual sanction for the reciprocal obligations between father's sister and brother's son.

Before we pass on to Part II, our Period of Transition, it will be necessary to emphasize the main points of our Traditional Background. We have endeavoured here to present the indigenous religious concepts and organisation of the Anloawo within a purely traditional context. The following are some of our main points in outline:

(i) A social and political structure rigidly buttressed by/

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1. See also Radcliffe-Brown's explanation of the principle of the unity of the 'sibling group': A son may be taught to regard his father's sibling group i.e. the body of brothers and sisters of common parentage as a united body with whom he is related as their 'son'. 'Introduction', African Systems of Kinship and Marriage, London, 1953, pp.23-24

by the religious system, the core of which is the worship of nature spirits and ancestral beings.

(ii) The basic units of social organisation are the lineage and the local community; the lineage also represents an effective functioning cult group.

(iii) The cult group also represents a unit of economic co-operation.

(iv) In the above socio-religious system the economy is largely subsistence, each social unit being almost entirely self-sufficient; division of labour or specialisation is negligible.

In Part II, our Period of Transition, we shall examine the influence of Western European ideas on this socio-religious structure.



PART II  
THE TRANSITION

CHAPTER VI

EUROPEAN CONTACT: ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE

Thus far, we have presented Anlo magico-religious beliefs and practices from a purely traditional standpoint. But the traditional structure has not been static; it has ever been in a state of flux. Since the days of migration from Notsie developments of purely local, and especially of foreign origin have contributed to certain changes in the traditional religious structure. Following Lucy Mair, we may isolate three streams of contact as religious, political, and economic, with their representatives as missionary, administrator and trader.<sup>(1)</sup> We may add a fourth - education - which is essentially an outlet of the religious stream, although the political stream also contributes to it. In the native mind, all of these streams are comprehended by the term "civilisation".

This "civilisation" first began to percolate to Southern Eweland in the 18th century by trade with different European powers - Portuguese, Danes, English - by wars with Europeans or European-supported native forces, and by missionary enterprise. But it was not until the acknowledgment of British military power in June 1874 that the new institutions began to make their mark.

In this and the following chapter we shall have occasion to examine the four streams, their interaction with the traditional institutions, particularly the magico-religious.

1. Lucy Mair, An African People in the 20th Century, London, 1934, p.12.

(1)

British Administration and New Chiefly Roles

On the 22nd June 1874, a peace treaty was signed at Dzelukofe<sup>(1)</sup> by which the Anloawo became British subjects. This was close on the heels of the Treaty of Fomena which had concluded the "Sagrenti" War<sup>(2)</sup> in which the Anloawo had taken sides with the Ashanti and against the British.

1. See Further Correspondence Respecting the Ashantee Invasion No.2. Enclosure 3 in No.53, Article IV: The text is as follows: "Other tribes or nations having been unhappily drawn into this war as friends and allies, the Ahwoonlah (Anlo) and Addah nations agree and solemnly promise that they will immediately call upon all such to lay down their arms, and consolidate a peace which is honourable to all parties.

In proof of our truth and sincere desire for peace, we subscribe our names to this Treaty, a copy of which will be retained by each party.

(Signed)

King of Ahwoonlah (Anlo)  
 Abraham August, on behalf of the King of  
 Ahwoonlah (Anlo)  
 Gamoo, his X mark, King's messenger  
 Jordor, his X mark, 2nd Officer Jella Coffee  
 (Dzelukofe)  
 Arbojee, his X mark, Representative of Armayar  
 Though (Doe), his X mark, Representative of Arvoonah  
 Potee (Kpotsi), his X mark, Representative for  
 Yarhoe-tar-nar-curoe  
 Though (Doe) II, his X mark, for Chief of Jella  
 Coffee (Dzelukofe)  
 Acalee (Akoli), his X mark, for Chief Jorcotoe  
 (Dzokotoe)

Witnessed:

(Signed)

John H. Glover, Administrator of Lagos  
 Charles Wm. Andrew, Commander H.M.S. "Lee"  
 Thos. Geo. Lawson, Government Interpreter,  
 Sierra Leone

W. Addo, Government Interpreter, Accra

2. W.E. Ward, A Short History of the Gold Coast, London, 1956, p.165.

The history of that early British rule in these parts of the Guinea Coast is meagre, but the impression gained was that the jungles and the lagoon swamps of the interior remained relatively free of British control even after the treaty of 1874. It was only after the passing of the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance (1883) which introduced a measure of indirect rule that direct British jurisdiction began to extend beyond the immediate precincts of the Fort Prinzenstein (of Keta).

At this time, Southern Eweland was made up of a number of small political units, each of which, by tradition, enjoyed political independence.<sup>(1)</sup> In 1912, on the recommendations of F.G. Crowther, then Secretary for Native Affairs,<sup>(2)</sup> these units were amalgamated into one administrative unit and named the Anlo State. The Anlo Awoame Fia received government recognition as the natural political head of the new State. Thus, for the first time, all the political units of Southern Eweland were merged into one political body.

The original heads of the units did not altogether lose their former status. They continued the exercise of their former political (and or religious) office, as before, minus absolute power. In meetings of the heads of units and their councillors (that is the State Council) the Awoame Fia presided as Chairman or President of Council.

The Awoame Fia, now Paramount Chief, is also responsible

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1. Independent status did not preclude co-operation among the units. The fact was that all the units looked upon one another as brothers, the big brother, Anlo taking the initiative in matters of common interest, as for example, rallying the brothers to repel aggression against any member of the fraternity.
  2. See The Gold Coast Review, Vol.III, No.1 January-June (1927) pp.11-55.

to the District Commissioner or Government Agent, an appointee of Central Government. The Crowther Report has thus created a new Awoame Fia with new political functions virtually distinct from the traditional role. This redefinition of status and re-assignment of chiefly functions came into conflict with certain Anlo religious concepts.

Traditionally, the Anlo Awoame Fia was the chief tro-priest (the "High Priest") of the nation, entrusted with semi-political and full religious functions such as we have observed in the preceding chapters. Politically, his position was that of a constitutional head. He ruled by the help of a council of lineage-heads of his clan (i.e. Adzovia or Bate) in addition to the awadada and the asafohenegawo. He was the final arbiter of justice.

His person being inviolate, custom required his confinement to his Awoame - the official residence. His person was taboo to commoners or members of the general public. Most of his religious assignments were discharged within the Awoame. When the occasion required visits to the Nyigbla shrine, such visits were nocturnal and his advance proclaimed by heralds. The object was to give as little temptation as possible to passers-by who were sure to be supernaturally smitten should they behold his person.

Now, with the advent of the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance of 1883 and the implementation of the Crowther Report of 1912, the position of the Awoame Fia became fundamentally changed. No longer can he confine himself to the Awoame. He is now responsible to a larger territorial-political unit - the Anlo State. Politically, his status is no longer that of a constitutional head. He takes an active part in the day-to-day administration of the State.

He is the Chairman of the State Council.<sup>(1)</sup> He almost daily consorts with the local District Commissioner or Government Agent in all matters of State, especially those relating to Central Government. (In the old Tribunal, he was a leading adjudicator.)

His new functions carry him beyond State boundaries. He crosses the Volta River to attend inter-state meetings of Paramount rulers - the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs or its equivalent. He is a representative of his State in the country's legislature.<sup>(2)</sup>

All these changes are evidences of new rights and new obligations within the framework of indirect rule. As Westermann points out, "indirect rule does not mean that the position of the Chief and his administrative machinery remain the same as before. He and his political activities become an organic part of the European administration and must be adapted to it."<sup>(3)</sup>

These adaptations have naturally conflicted with the traditional status and role of the paramount Chief. By constant exposure to the public eye as required by his new status and role, his person is become desecrated. He enjoys greater political power, but he is practically shorn of his sanctity and traditional reverence. His person is no longer inviolate. Men behold him and are not stricken by blindness or insanity, nor do they fall dead by the wayside.

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1. See G.C. Native Authority (Colony) Ordinance.
  2. In the new Parliamentary democracy of independent Ghana with its party politics the Chief plays a comparatively minor role in the country's central legislature; but the constitution guarantees him a place in the regional legislature.
  3. Westermann, The African Today and Tomorrow, London, 1949, p.79.

Aside from the desecration of his person, the Paramount Chief's new roles - chiefly political and administrative functions - tend to supersede, supplant or restrict customary ritual obligations. Consequently, the sanction for his authority no longer derives from his ritual obligations but from the support of the alien power. All these changes have the composite effect of casting doubts on the efficacy of the individual's religious belief and practice. Today, it is a common practice among the elderly folk with a deep faith in the traditional religion to ascribe some of the xexemegbegble (that is, the difficulties of the time) to the religious capitulation of the Paramount Chief.

(2)

Ordinances and Traditional Cults

Following the policy of indirect rule, and the attitude of religious toleration as practised in Britain, freedom of worship was extended to all the traditional cults in Southern Eweland. The basis was the assumption that native political institutions contain values which are capable of development and whose loss would be detrimental to the people. In the beginning (i.e. since enactment of Native Juris. Ord. 1883) therefore, the government sought to preserve those values enshrined in the people's religion, and to enlist them in the service of the new administration.

But, as earlier pointed out, by Westermann, these native institutions must "become an organic part of the European administration and must be adapted to it". The inherent principle in this idea is that African indigenous methods and conceptions shall remain effective in so far as they do not conflict with the



natural sense of justice and fairplay. While the fundamental attitude of religious toleration remains the same, the indigenous cults which have conflicted with that sense of justice and fairplay have, of course, been weeded out, banned by government ordinance, thereby unwittingly restricting traditional religious practice.

According to Section 5 of the Native Customs (Colony) Ordinance, a number of "fetishes" (cults) in the country were suppressed by Order of the Governor in Council:

"The Aberewa Fetish, the Ati Fetish, the Gbanyeh Fetish, the Hwemisu, Fwe-me-so, Buani, Eguasa, Kwana, Kwaku,<sup>(1)</sup> Nframa, Kwasa, Doukor, Breku, Kwesi, Akua or Sakra Fetish. The Kataware Fetish; the Kreme Fetish; the Nkona or Nkore Fetish, the Otutu Fetish; the Oyeadu Fetish; the Kundo Fetish."

Anyone practising a suppressed "fetish" was liable to imprisonment with or without hard labour for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding fifty pounds. By this, native courts were given wide powers to deal with all offensive "fetishes".

While British justice did not accept the reality or efficacy

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1. Investigations on the now defunct "Kwaku" cult have led to the following revelations: Like most trowo in Anlo, "Kwaku" "possessed" its followers, and during "possession", men mutilated their bodies with knives and cutlasses. The understanding was that no blood was let, no matter how sharp the implements. In a state of possession, Kwaku, the tro itself immunized followers in their frantic behaviour. Further investigations revealed, however, that not all members were so protected. The tro picked and chose only loyal supporters for protection or immunization; the half-hearted, disloyal members not infrequently injured themselves. To the cult, this was a test of true membership. To the Government, the whole practice was injurious and suicidal; hence the proscription by ordinance.

of witchcraft and medicine or dzoduame, nevertheless, within the framework of indirect rule, the whole native "magic" art was given a pseudo-recognition in the paramount Chief, Divisional Chief or Local Council Courts. In the Native Administration (Colony) Ordinance sub-section 52 (12), putting any person in fetish was a punishable offence. The penalty was "a fine not exceeding twenty-five pounds, or in default of payment imprisonment with or without hard labour for any term not exceeding three months."

Besides proscription by ordinance or legislation, District Commissioners or Government Agents were also empowered to use their own discretions in upholding or destroying religious cults in their districts. This goes back to the whole question of cults being judged in conflict or in harmony with natural sense of justice and fairplay. Cults believed to be inimical to the best interests of the community, or judged hostile to Central Government policies were speedily destroyed, root and branch.

At Klikor, an elderly informant gave an impressive account of how in about 1913 a team of health officers were sent over to them (at Klikor) by the then District Commissioner at Keta, a Mr. Phillips, for the purpose of vaccinating against a threatening epidemic. When the elite of the Community i.e. the ritual specialists - the tro-priests and the bokowo (diviners) - advised against vaccination as contrary to the wishes of the trowo, the health officers were ousted. When persuasion failed, the District Commissioner intervened with a company of the then Gold Coast police force. There followed indiscriminate arrests and the systematic destruction of all the available shrines. Some of these cults, according to my informant, have never been resuscitated.

A treatise on the morality of this episode is beside the point. What is relevant to present purpose is that Klikor had entered a new phase in her evolution when cults and ritual specialists - the elite of the Community - could be destroyed or arrested with impunity.

At the turn of the century, the execution axe was raised against the now famous Yewe cult on grounds that its practices were immoral and the cult generally unwholesome. Before the notice of execution could be served, leaders of Yewe, in concerted action, took the initiative to refute the as-yet-unpreferred charges of malpractices. Fully supported in Yewe's demands by the late Togbi Sri II, Paramount Chief (of Anlo), the government was content to stay execution pending developments in the cult. Copies of communications that passed between Yewe leaders and the Eastern Provincial Commissioner's office at Accra in December 1915 have been meticulously preserved. Later, Yewe compiled a small pamphlet, published in the vernacular (Ewe) in order to educate the Government and the general public on the true character of Yewe. The pamphlet set forth a number of "don'ts" enjoined upon followers and the particular punishment to be meted to delinquents or defaulters. Each member of the cult was expected to own a copy.

The axe of execution was similarly raised against cults accused of homicide. Donutete of Atito offers a good example. This cult was banned because it was held responsible for the death of a member. On the death of the member in question, post mortem examination revealed that death was due to a sprain in the neck. Evidences were later adduced to the effect that the mortal injury was sustained during "possession". This evidence sealed

the fate of Donutete. It was banned forthwith.

The latest move by the local Councils is the annual issue of a "licence", which appears to be a document of attestation of fitness for a cult to function.<sup>(1)</sup> The object is to continue in such close surveillance of cults as to facilitate pruning when the occasion arises.<sup>(2)</sup> The licence is also a means of exacting money from the cults.

We have surveyed some of the major fronts on which the new administration has indirectly restricted traditional religious practice, even in the midst of "religious toleration". These restrictions have been effected in the name of justice and fairplay, the best interests of the community, etc. What is of relevance here is that a new institution - European administration - has supplanted the old, resulting in changes which seem to be to the detriment of the old structure.

### (3)

#### Social Service and Traditional Cults

Some of the dynamic outgrowths of the new administration are the government social services. These include the provision of health and welfare services, communications and trade, the education of the masses, formal education and the development of

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1. This includes practising herbalists. In fact, the licence was originally intended for only practising medical herbalists.
  2. At Dzodze, the Local Council here has ruled that all Yewe cult-followers must obtain a "pass" before alagadzedze (possession). This implies that when a cult-follower has been offended, "possession" or running wild must first be negotiated with the Council. This form of control, needless to say, takes the wind out of the sail of alagadzedze.

water services. <sup>As in</sup> Like other parts of Ghana and West Africa generally, all of these novelties, individually and collectively, exert varying influence on indigenous religious thought and practice.

These new services are here discussed, first, as a part of the index of social change, and secondly, as a factor in conflict with traditional religious practice. It is more of a descriptive than a diagnostic study.

(i) Health Services: For curative medicine, the focal-point of medical treatment in the Anlo State is the hospital at Keta. From very humble beginnings in the thirties, it now has two wards for males and females - maternity and infant wards and an isolation block for the treatment of infectious diseases. There are 58 beds. There is a full-time medical officer in the service of both in and out patients. The nursing staff is 18.

Besides the hospital, there are clinics, dispensaries and dressing stations manned by government and mission personnel. These include a dressing station at Akatsi, clinics at Dzodze and Abor (run by Roman Catholic Mission Sisters). New clinics in construction include one at Anloga and a child welfare clinic at Vodzɔ. More dressing stations are being built by local authorities.

A fully mobile medical field unit, with headquarters at Kintampo, is fully in charge of mass disease control. Its duties include surveys and mass treatment of endemic diseases such as yaws, trypanosomiasis, bilharzia, guinea-worm, leprosy, malaria, onchocerciasis.

For the purpose of maintaining satisfactory environmental health conditions in the towns and villages, the Ministry of Health maintains a Health Superintendent and a staff of Health Inspectors.

These officers devote a considerable amount of their time to advising local authorities and the public generally about the need for sanitary disposal of night soil and dry refuse; abatement of fly breeding and mosquito breeding, food hygiene; disposal of the dead and maintenance of cemeteries; provisions of water supplies and disposal of waste water, and, in short, all aspects of environmental health.<sup>(1)</sup>

(ii) Social Welfare and Community Development: This is one of the new government departments contributing immensely to the dissemination of European values and ideals in the villages and the rural areas. Theirs is the fostering and encouragement of all forms of activity designed to promote better living. In the Anlo State, the general aim includes the following objectives:

- (a) The improvement of the conditions of the Community by materials means, e.g. the construction of roads, water-supplies, latrines, etc. by communal effort under the guidance and with the assistance of this and other government departments, or other organisations. The dissemination of elementary knowledge of hygiene and sanitation to improve health may also be included in this objective.
- (b) The improvement of morale and the widening of mental horizons by the encouragement of literacy.
- (c) The dissemination of information as an extension service of Government.<sup>(2)</sup>

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1. Trans-Volta Togoland Handbook 1955 (Government publication), p.20.  
 2. Ibid, p.14.



The supervisory staff available are:

- 1 Mass Education Officer
- 1 Social Welfare Officer
- 1 Assistant Mass Education Officer
- 5 Mass Education Assistants.

The following statistics on literacy drive in Anlo were made available by the Mass Education Officer in charge, Keta: <sup>(1)</sup>

Council Area	No. of villages in which Exam held	No. of 1st Cert	Passes 2nd Cert <sup>(2)</sup>	Total
North Anlo L. C.	5	41	56	97
Central Anlo L. C.	3	24	28	52
South Anlo L. C.	6	52	52	74
Keta Urban Council	4	8	7	15
Avenor L. C.	9	120	49	169
Dzodze L. C.	1	12	8	20
Weta-Apipe-Klikor L. C.	6	84	19	103
Some L. C.	3	8	20	28
Aflao L. C.	6	91	21	112

(iii) Agriculture: Education in scientific agriculture and the extension service were set on a firm footing in 1955 with the building of a 900 acre central agricultural station at Ohawu near Abor, an inland town. The station has a bungalow, offices and staff quarters.

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1. The occasion of the presentation of the Certificates was a public event witnessed by a large crowd at the "London Park" on 30th November, 1957.
  2. The recipient of this Certificate is a fluent reader in the vernacular, can write easily readable letters and can do simple arithmetic.

Some of the main functions of the Station include the following:

- (a) Investigation into local annual crops and live-stock, with particular emphasis on problems of mixed farming and animal husbandry and the use of fertilisers.
- (b) Investigations into local perennial crops, particularly problems of coconut cultivation and disease on the littoral and the Dzodze oil palm industry.
- (c) Investigations into mechanized agriculture and the possibilities of introducing mechanization into the farming system of the district.
- (d) As a centre for extension work and the conduct of research. (1)

The staff include the following:

- 1 Agriculture Officer
- 1 Senior Technical Officer
- 5 Agricultural Assistants
- 130 Labourers.

The annual agricultural exhibition at Abor and Ohawu which forms a part of the extension service attracts large numbers of people from the various parts of the Keta district in particular, and the Country in general. Prizes are normally awarded to the best producers of crops and livestock.

(iv) Other services include rural water development, the construction of motorable roads and the provision of postal services and telecommunications.

In regard to rural water development, power operated pumps have been fitted at Ehi, Dzodze, Wute, Abor, Penyi Yokoe and Agove, each with a daily output of 61,500 gallons. Successful boreholes have been sunk at a large number of places including Adrume, Zagato, Kuli-Jolafi, Atijive, Kuchin and Agbedrafo. Keta-Dzelukofe has piped water supply. All of these have been accomplished in the 1950's (i.e. between 1950 and 1956).

The construction of motorable roads has been the joint responsibility of the government and the chiefs. In more recent times, local councils have taken over from the chiefs. The main road on the littoral is from Anyanui to Denu. Feeder roads in the district did not get underway until towards the end of 1954. By June 1955, with the help of communal labour, the Penyi through Ehie to Agbozome road was completed.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Department of Posts and Telecommunications has as its aim the provision of an adequate system of postal services and telecommunication. A number of postal agencies, some with telecommunication facilities are available in a number of towns and villages on the littoral and the rural areas of the interior. Telegraph lines link the district with all parts of the country. Thus far, a few villages across the lagoon are the only places still handicapped in postal service.

All of these services collectively convey the picture of a new state, a new world. Some of these (services) are clearly and directly in conflict with traditional religious concepts, but collectively they all serve the function of detractors from traditional values and sentiments.

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1. Refer to map for the other roads and the location of towns.

Like the European or European-trained physician, the "medicineman" and the ritual specialists of his type are devoted to the cure of sickness and the termination of disease; but there is no denying the fact the latter have a different orientation from the professions of the trained medical practitioner. Whereas the medicineman believes in sickness or disease as the natural expression of supernatural disfavour or the machinations of "malevolent" spirits, the European-trained physician thinks in terms of unbalanced diet and disease germs emanating from unhealthy surroundings. Naturally, the therapeutic approaches differ, since the bases of medical practice differ.

Thus, when the government through their welfare officers, mass education teams, successfully win over patients into hospitals, maternity and child welfare clinics, they are striking at the very root of indigenous religious concepts: belief in the power of the trowo to afflict and to reward - the basis of tro-worship.

From a general point of view, the new services collectively detract from the traditional values and sentiments obtaining in the society.

Aside from their intrinsic social value, it is becoming fashionable to look upon these new government services as the hall-mark of "civilization". To draw water from standing pipes, post and receive letters, receive and transmit telephone messages, have clinics and hospitals, dispensaries and dressing stations, health officers visiting compounds and inspecting the lanes and by-ways is a sign of "culture", "enlightenment", "civilization" for the village concerned. The village bereft

of these amenities is "bush", "backward", "uncivilised".

As a village enters upon the stage of "civilization", there is the tendency to move away from things traditional, at least externally, tradition becoming the enemy of progress. Thus, with minor exceptions, as we journey from the littoral inland, there is a corresponding attachment to traditions, because of the uneven distribution of social amenities, there being some amount of concentration along the coast. At Keta, for instance, most inhabitants are quite ignorant (or claim to be ignorant) of indigenous customs, including religious beliefs.

A Community Development Officer temporarily stationed at Keta gave an account of his personal experience which immediately suggests another analytic point in regard to Government Social Services within the community. The Officer in question and his staff had conducted a "health campaign" in a village. Weeks later, a missionary evangelized in the same village. A member of the village who had earlier listened to the Officer returned to enquire from the latter whether the religion of the missionary was in keeping with his own religion (referring to the health campaign) and whether he could embrace the second one as well.

The guarded, carefully worded response of the Officer is immaterial for our present purpose. What is relevant is the implication or suggestion that government services are conceived as part and parcel of a new religion. Further investigations have shown, however, that this conception does not reflect the thinking of the great majority of the Anloawo. Culturally, the traditional Anlo society does not admit of conflicts, hatred, jealousy, rivalry between cults or "sects" such as is typical

of Christianity, at least in Eweland.

This, of course, does not detract from the veracity or reliability of the case-history in question. It is possible that the Development Officer in question may have applied a religious psychology in his approach to the masses. Christian religion being an "old guard" in the field and government services comparatively new, the application of the methods of Christianity may yield dividends. For example, the Officer concerned may have initiated his health campaign as follows: "We have brought you a new religion; the religion which gives you a better understanding of the causes of diseases...." Such an approach could lead to less firm distinctions drawn between religion and "civilization", especially in the minds of the illiterate pagan folk.

Among the Ga-speaking people of Accra and neighbouring villages, M.J. Field observed the tendency to personify government as a great nature spirit, full of miraculous deeds and assuming the obligations of many a smaller god whose worship eventually recedes to the background.<sup>(1)</sup> There appears to be no such correspondence of thought among the Anloawo. The Anloawo seem to distinguish between xoseyeye (new faith of the white man) and nkuwuwu ("civilization").

Whether or not government services are conceived as xoseyeye (the gospel according to Christ) or nkuwuwu (the gospel according to "civilization") the composite effect is a mitigation of the influence or the hold of indigenous beliefs on the causes of sickness, hence a movement away from the traditional religious concepts (as explained elsewhere).

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1. M.J. Field, Religion and Medicine of the Ga, London, 1937.



(4)

European Currency and Wage Labour in Relation to  
Traditional Cults

Before we discuss the specific case of the nature of money economy in Anlo and its effects on traditional life and belief, we shall first take a broad view of money or European currency and its implications for the preliterate society.

Perhaps we can reach our problem directly by examining those basic purposes served by money in the European economy. It is an elementary economic knowledge that money avoids the difficulties of barter. One disposes of one's goods by exchanging them for a general exchange power in the form of money which is then used in purchasing whatever is required when it is available. With money, one may buy and sell services as well as goods. Thus the use of money makes specialization possible: specialization in the production of different kinds of goods and in different kinds of work, manual and mental. By serving as a medium of exchange, money makes possible the elaborate division of labour so characteristic of the European economic system. Money also serves the function of a common denominator of values, or the instrument for making calculations and assessments with respect to wealth in other forms.

Such economy introduced into a purely subsistence economy or barter system will naturally have far-reaching socio-economic implications. It seems to be generally acknowledged that while most non-literate societies have almost always resented European domination and have shown some resistance to the edicts of the European administration, they have, as it were, come out to meet

the economic forces impinging upon their society.<sup>(1)</sup> This is amply reflected in the great desire for European goods. In view of the close inter-relationship between the economic system of the preliterate community and all other aspects of social life, the new economy naturally influences both economic activities and all other features of the social framework, producing radical changes. We shall examine in broad outlines some of these changes as a basis for the discussion of the contemporary Anlo economy.

With the introduction of money, productive effort is no longer entirely directed to the production of food or locally "marketable" goods. Some of this effort goes into services for money and the production of cash crops. The cocoa industry in Ashanti is a typical example in Ghana. The sale of one's services for money entails periodic exodus from the family, which in turn leads to the dislocation of social life.

Money economy also affects the productive organization. In traditional life the productive organization is based on kinship and common residence of the local community. Now employees work, not as a group of kinsmen or neighbours, but as individuals solely interested in their wages. This undermines the unity of the group as a lineage and as a mutual-aid group.

In communal labour or mutual-aid interest may be expressed in the work itself; on the other hand the productive effort in money economy, especially manual labour, may be marked by drudgery, routine and regimentation. By this, the productive effort serves merely as a means to the acquisition of money. In the traditional economy, work alternates with leisure, when days and weeks on end

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1. Ralph Piddington, Introduction to Social Anthropology, Vol.II. p.664.

may be set aside for festivities and ceremonies. The harvest-home rites and related festivities are examples. In the regimentation of work under money economy, days of leisure are shorter and less frequent. This is a serious interference with traditional festivals and family ceremonies. Finally, money introduces new status positions, individualism and less regard for traditional authority, as will be revealed by subsequent discussions relating to the Anlo economy.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Portuguese have been credited with the introduction of cowrie currency into Anlo and West Africa generally. It supplemented barter, the system of economic exchange common to all preliterate societies. This remained the medium of exchange until Britain assumed the reins of government in 1874. Even at the turn of the century, cowries (hotsuidzoboku and hotsuinyuie) were still in circulation side by side with the British "corbar" and "kapley"<sup>(2)</sup> and the German marks of neighbouring "German Togoland". This implies that wage labour, now the dominant economic system, is a relatively recent phenomenon.

Today, Western currency is become the medium of nearly all economic transactions. It has displaced autarchy, barter and cowrie currency. Now, the last vestiges of mutual-aid appear to be on the brink of final collapse. Extended use of British currency has meant increased and accelerated wage labour.

Aside from occupations of indigenous character now geared to money economy, various modern pursuits directly based on

1. See also Piddington, op.cit.

2. "Corbar" is the equivalent of the English penny or the German 5 pfening ("finiki"). "Kapley", meaning "Corbar", was later introduced from the Upper Volta.

money accentuate the circulation of money. The government, as the largest employer of labour, has a large number of employees as civil servants, clerical employees and administrators. There is also a large number of non-clerical daily rated employees building or mending the roads and doing other public works directly under the government. These are all paid in cash. The army of teachers in primary, middle and secondary schools receive payments in cash. School children pay fees in cash in order to attend school. Church collections are raised in cash and church functionaries are paid in cash. The relatively recent local taxations as well as the services connected with the Local Councils and Native Administrations are all transacted by money payment. In short, money payment permeates every aspect of social and political life.

In the following paragraphs are described, in outline, some of the representative indigenous transactions involving the handling of British currency:

(i) Fishing: Until recent times, all kinds of fishing - river, lagoon, deep sea - have been primarily for subsistence purposes. With the growing demand for fish among the northern neighbours of the Anloawo, in Ashanti and Northern Ghana, fishing, particularly the Afafa (horse mackerel), has taken on a new look. It has developed into a full-time "currency industry". The following is Barbara Ward's graphic account of the industry at Keta, which I have found to be generally accurate:

The industry is in the hands of "fishing companies" generally composed of full-time workers, and each using one or more boats. Each boat and each net has a specific owner, who may be a man or woman, and who is not necessarily a working

member of the company. Boats and nets are actually worked by a group of men chosen by the company head, or a man responsible to the boat-owner.... The crew ... agree to work for one company for a whole season, after which they may disperse or "sign on" again. When the Keta season is over the whole company will often move down the coast to Badagry in Nigeria to fish there, returning for the beginning of the next Keta season. Thus, fishing becomes a full-time specialist activity, and Keta fishermen do not usually farm.

Food and sometimes clothing and other necessities are paid out of the proceeds of the fishing. Women, who may be the wives of fishermen or themselves members of the company, take contracts for cooking for each company for the whole season. Women are also responsible for curing and selling the fish, which (if they are not themselves company members) they buy from the men, the money being put into the common funds of the company. Each member also receives some portion of each catch to sell for himself.

At the end of the season the profits are divided between the members of the company, larger shares going to the boat- and net-owners and to members exercising special responsibility, such as boat-crew captains, or with posts of special danger, such as swimmers. Some money is set aside for repairs and general overhead charges, the cooks are paid, and the remaining sum is divided equally among the rest of the company.

With the development of lorry traffic the retailing of cured fish is become a large-scale business, entirely dominated by women, usually of the educated class. Regular supplies

are sent up country to the Gold Coast as far afield as Kumasi and Tamale. As a rule contracts are made with lorry drivers, who deliver the fish to be sold in the markets by female relatives of the women head of the business in Keta.<sup>(1)</sup>

The account demonstrates the extent to which sea-fishing has become a modern economic industry, a source of western currency to illiterate fishermen and their wives, and to both literate and semiliterate women traders.

(ii) Trade: We have noted cured fish as a commodity for trade in the hands of illiterate and semiliterate women. Similarly, agricultural products, the shallot industry of Anloga for example, crafts such as the local kente industry, the salt industry of the lagoon basin, offer items of trade for western currency. Traders travel on "mammy" lorries from one town to another.

On the littoral, it is now commonplace to see men and women, illiterates as well as literates, setting up as independent traders in exclusively European wares: Lancashire cotton prints, headkerchiefs, china wares, enamel bowls and dishes, toiletry, etc. etc. On a market day these are displayed artistically in market stalls or in the open. All these entail a large circulation of western currency.

But what is the effect of these novel economic transactions on the content of indigenous religion? Setting up as independent trader implies economic independence of the family, which in turn generates individualism. Individualism in the

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1. Quoted by Madeline Manoukian in the Ewe-Speaking People of Togoland and the Gold Coast, pp.16-17.



traditional set-up makes for a direct negation of those sentiments of family solidarity fostered by religion. Not least is the weakening of the ritual authority of the lineage-head. Individuals who have become economically independent are naturally hesitant, if not altogether reluctant about following established traditions.

In former times, as Dr. Little has observed among the Mende of Sierre Leone, "the younger men as well as most of the women were almost entirely under the control of senior members of the family. They had to rely on their elders not only for economic support, but for most of the available ways of attaining extra social status and other forms of social benefit."<sup>(1)</sup> Today, most young men marry the girl of their choice, pay the bride-wealth from their own earning and by-pass a good many of the traditional sanctions.

Of more specific effect on the traditional religion is the factor of wage labour, especially migrant labour.

A fair percentage of Ewe-speaking people in general have established "colonies" "abroad". There is the Ewe "colony" on the Accra plains; there is the Anlo "colony" of New Ayoma in the Buem Krachi district of Central Trans-Volta Togoland Region, 15 miles off Hohoe. Here, about 90% of the total population of 795<sup>(2)</sup> (228 in 1931), comprising 444 males and 351 females are Anloawo who have established near the coffee and cocoa plantations as seasonal migrant workers. There is also Apife-Kofe near Ho, peopled almost entirely by settlers from Apife in the

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1. African Worlds, London, 1954, p.134.

2. Gold Coast Census Report, 1948.

Keta district. There are evidences of Anlo migrant workers in the cocoa farms of Ashanti.<sup>(1)</sup>

In recent times, attention of villages around the lagoons has been focusing on the Kwatia Lumber Mills of the west. When the lagoon is in flood and the weather too cold and windy for the villagers to fish to advantage, there is a large exodus of able-bodied young men to seek "economic pastures" beyond the lagoon. Most of these formerly joined the afafa "fishing companies" of the coast. Today, a large number now turn to Kwatia (town) for a season of flourishing lumber industry. At the height of the exodus, village headmen, by their own methods, reckon over 40% of the young men migrating to Kwatia.<sup>(2)</sup>

Accounts of the duration of stay or the return home are conflicting. The understanding seems to be the absence of any regimentation in these matters; individual differences prevail. However, a fairly large number seem to stay away for as long as six months (or longer), and most return home in March to April, i.e. around Easter, and also according to personal exigencies. The March-April return home coincides with the initiation of numerous tro rites in Anlo.

A study of the groups in their new temporary habitat will certainly reveal some of the sociological problems of a pre-literate society struggling for adjustment under a changing

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1. For fishing purposes, there are also Anlo "colonies" at Shama, Saltpond, Abidjan, in Liberia and Sierra Leone. There are also Anloawoto (Anlo wards) at Koforidua, Nsawam, besides a large number of immigrants at Accra.
  2. This, added to those who have entered into contract with fishing companies, make a virtual periodic depopulation of the villages concerned.

economy. There are problems of adjustment for the worker in the new environment, and also problems of adjustment for the rest of the family at home. Here, we shall confine ourselves to the specific effect of migrant wage labour on the indigenous religion.

While there is no question of migrant workers relinquishing or becoming oblivious of traditional religious rites at home, there is no denying the fact that a lengthy stay away from home weakens or relaxes the force of religious ties with home. The African's religion finds its most beneficent expression in group participation. Away from home, the migrant worker misses the social group for the ancestral rites. The lineage and public du trowo may be propitiated only in their natural indigenous habitat, which is home.

We may ask, what of the charms or dzowo? Since the interest in these is personal and individualistic, the migrant worker away from home may "fortify" himself with all the charms available.<sup>(1)</sup> But these are only protective. They ward off evil, but lack the blessings of the ancestors and the trowo. In a contest it pays to be both on the defensive and the offensive.

Herein lies the impelling necessity for reunion with the family in ancestral rites, or with the village folk for participation in public rites. Some migrant workers are known to return home briefly - two to four weeks - and then go back. Such brief visits are nearly always in the interest of ancestral or funeral rites, or other form of religious ceremony.

But not infrequently, circumstances make it impossible for

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1. See Chapter IV, Section 5.

the worker to reunite with home and family. Several months may pass by. Funeral rites have been postponed and repostponed until matters have reached a limit considered dangerous to the survival of the family. The psychological effect is bound to be astounding. There is a growing feeling of insecurity and helplessness. Every mishap may be attributed to the vengeance of the spirits. The result is a higher appeal to witchcraft and the charms.

If the magnetic force of the new environment tends heavily towards Christianity, our migrant worker is influenced by circumstances to identify himself with a Christian church. He must be like the rest. Thereafter, any feeling for the traditional religious beliefs, and the interest in witchcraft and the charms remain secret, and their practices go underground.

Let us assume that our migrant worker has been eventually reunited with home and family. Even though not as yet a tried and seasoned Christian, he turns up his nose against his former religious beliefs and practices. Slowly but insidiously, by word and deed, he turns out to be the "vector" of a new faith, which, to all intents and purposes, seeks to oust the traditional one.

In a tour of inspection of the public shrines of Anloga, the nation's toxodu (i.e. shrine town), my guides pointed to a number of empty shrines, empty of priests, empty of sacrificial offerings, and remarked: "The shrines are periodically empty when the ritual officials are out to look after themselves" (i.e. engage in trade). But they quickly interpolated, not that the trowo are dead or defunct; they are ever alive. The plain fact

is that certain tro priests can no longer support themselves solely by the proceeds of priesthood. The exigencies of modern life with its emphasis on economic independence and specialization are gradually and insidiously altering the religious patterns. The tro priest, like his fellows of the village, must venture abroad to supplement his earnings.

## CHAPTER VII

### EUROPEAN CONTACT: CHURCH AND SCHOOL

#### (I)

#### THE CHURCH

In 1953 the centenary of the first Christian mission church in the Anlo State was celebrated at Keta. This was followed by the Anyako centenary in November 1957, this time in the interior, beyond the lagoon. Places along the littoral such as Woe, Anloga, have since marked the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of the church there.

Christianity has thus been propagated in Anlo for at least a century. Indeed, these decades have not been in vain, for the multiplicity of churches today points to a measure of success. In places, two or more denominations vie for the soul of the Anlo. But this measure of success has not been without the attendant disabilities for the indigenous customs, beliefs and practices: where Christianity and the indigenous religion meet, there is an ideological conflict which sometimes expresses itself in a practical conflict.

In the following paragraphs is discussed the development of the churches of the various denominations and their effects on indigenous culture, particularly the magico-religious aspects.

(a) The Evangelical Presbyterian, formerly the Bremen



Mission Church:<sup>(1)</sup> this is the first Christian church known to Anlo (and indeed, to all Eweland). Missionary work began as far back as 1853.

Dauble and Plessing, the first German missionaries to lay the foundation of the church, landed at Dzelukofe on 2nd September 1853 whence they proceeded to Keta, three miles away. These were two of the four missionaries sent to West Africa by the North German Missionary Society of Bremen, formed in 1836 with a view to evangelizing Africa and Asia.

The missionaries took up lodgings in Fort Prinzenstein and almost immediately started work on permanent quarters. Three months later, Dauble died and was succeeded by Butchin. They preached the gospel at Keta and its environs; in the beginning, they were slow to win converts. In 1855, they could count five converts including a tro-priest from Dzelukofe. In 1857, the missionaries ventured farther inland, beyond the lagoon to open the first inland station at Anyako. Twelve years later, a seminary was established there. Subjects taught included the Vernacular (Ewe), English, Scriptures, Music (harmonium playing) and Mathematics.

By 1904 communicants of the church numbered 869 and from then trained Africans were equipped to teach and preach side by side with the missionaries. These were achievements in the midst

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1. After the first world war when the church apparently lost intimate contact with Germany, it was rechristened "Ewe" Presbyterian Church. Quite recently, it was further rechristened "Evangelical" Presbyterian Church in compromise with the demands of people of Buem who claimed that they were not "Ewe" but Akan.

of perennial warfare for the Anloawo were constantly at war with neighbouring tribes and the Danes of the fort Prinzenstein.

Since 1887 new branches of the church were opening in the district; some of these were Woe (1887), Dzelukofe (1888), Wute (1892), Agbozume (1893), Sadame (1897), Atoko (1900), Anloga (1906). During the 1930's and 1940's many more additions were made.

During the war years the church lost the services of its German missionaries, but old ties were renewed in the years of peace. It was during these years, especially, that new ties were forged with the Scottish Mission and the Evangelical and Reformed Church of North America.

Today, the work of the Church is almost entirely in the hands of African personnel, the first time an African Pastor took charge of the church being in 1921. There are four resident pastors at Keta, Anloga, Abor and Anyako serving as the headquarters of circuits. These pastors are responsible to a Synod Committee which oversees the work of the Church in Anlo State and Northern Eweland. Church membership is as follows:

	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Communicants</u>
Keta Circuit (including Anyako) ... ..	7,044	1,163
Anloga Circuit ... ..	2,703	779
Abor Circuit ... ..	1,202	438

Membership includes at least 8 chiefs and elders.

From the very inception of the Church educational activities have been inseparable from it.<sup>(1)</sup> Two years after the establishment

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1. Education is discussed separately; but as an integral part of the church, the school cannot be divorced from it. The educational materials touched upon here, are essentially, introductory.

of the church the first school was opened amidst great difficulties in pupil enrolment. The missionaries were hard put <sup>to it</sup> finding children for the school. So acute was the problem that they had to resort to the doubly humanitarian act of manumitting slaves for the purpose of educating them. It took some time for the native parents to catch on to it. In 1952, Keta alone could count 888 pupils and 26 teachers in the Evangelical Presbyterian Schools. In 1957 there were 48 primary schools, 233 teachers with an enrolment of 7,232, including 2,244 girls; and nine middle schools, 38 trained teachers (i.e. with Certificate A<sup>(1)</sup> or higher) with an enrolment of 1,127, including 336 girls.<sup>(2)</sup>

(b) Roman Catholic Church: Keta was first visited by Catholic priests from Agove (Dahomey). On 25th May 1890 the Reverend Fathers Wade and Thuet took up residence at Keta. They opened an English school almost at once and had 120 pupils. From 1890-1895 attempts were made to open schools at Agbozome, Anyako and Tegbi, but these were not a success. In 1897 a school was opened at Dzelukofe, 1903 at Denu, 1906 at Adafienu, 1907 at Adina, 1908 at Aflao, 1912 at Dzodze and the Girls' School at Keta.

The Reverend Fathers had to evangelize through the medium of schools because they had gained the impression that the natives of the Anlo State, were not easy to wean away from their indigenous

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1. Certificate 'A' is the qualification for a four-year teacher training education after the elementary or middle school.
  2. The information on the church has been based on materials collected from the pastors of the four circuits, particularly Rev. Lotsu and Rev. Ametewee, from the Synod Clerk of the Church at Ho, and supplemented by a number of vernacular pamphlets and booklets.

religion; one other reason was that the population was too mobile there being a good deal of up and down travelling for fishing and trade, that made difficult the consolidation of the work. The Reverend Father informant was positive that without the schools, there would have been no religious progress. This, he believes, accounts for the comparatively high percentage of literacy in the Anlo State, particularly along the littoral. According to him, educated Catholic travellers from here have been responsible for introducing Christianity or encouraging its growth at such places as Ada, Akuse, Koforidua, Nsawam.<sup>(1)</sup>

In 1923, there were some 4,000 members of the church in the State. In the same year, the present Trans-Volta territory had its first Bishop R.R.A. Herman. By 1913 Denu had a residential priest, Dzodze and Abor in 1928 and 1929 respectively, Dzelukofe in 1931. From these beginnings, the Church now has catholic communities (including schools) in almost every village in the State.

The Church (the Universal Catholic) has its headquarters in Rome whence the Pope appoints Bishops. The priests work under their Bishop and are appointed by him to the various parishes or ecclesiastical districts. Every Catholic community has a committee of male and female members who advise the priest and work under him.

Today, there is one Bishop in charge of the Keta Diocese (i.e. the geographical Trans-Volta Togoland Region); Abor has two priests, Denu one, Dzodze one, Dzelukofe two and

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1. The establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in Accra was also said to be due to the same agency. On several occasions sermons were preached in English and then translated into Ewe and not in Ga - Adangbe.

Keta two. At Dzodze four, and at Abor five sisters run medical clinics. Two sisters at Keta supervise the Girls' Boarding School. All these church functionaries are Europeans, Dutch mostly.

The membership of the Church in the state is as follows:-

			<u>Membership</u>	<u>Communicants</u>
Abor Circuit	...	...	9,919	2,058
Denu Circuit	...	...	9,811	1,992
Dzelukofe Circuit..	...	...	5,086	986
Dzodze Circuit	...	...	4,302	813
Keta Circuit	...	...	7,261	1,734
			<u>36,379</u>	<u>7,583</u>

During the last 20 years, the number of stations (churches) has doubled and the enrolment has increased by over 500%. The following statistics summarise the point:<sup>(1)</sup>

			<u>1930</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1957</u>
Number of Churches	...	...	30	45	60
Number of Ministers	...	...	6	8	8
Membership	...	...	7,000	13,000	36,000

We have already underscored the importance of the school as an integral part of the church. Its function was initially a means to the Church; today, when the church has taken deeper roots, the schools flourish in their own field. There are 47 primary schools with a teaching staff of 235 and pupil enrolment of 7621, including 2085 girls. For the middle schools, there are eleven schools with 49 teachers (all holding Certificate A or higher qualifications) and an enrolment of 1702 including 532 girls.

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1. The materials on the Roman Catholic Church have been compiled almost entirely from interview with the Rev. Fathers, particularly Father Beekers of Dzelukofe, through the good offices of the resident Bishop, Right Rev. Koenig. Written materials with any significant bearing on the work of the church in these parts, are hard to come by.

These figures, compared with those of 1942, indicate a phenomenal progress within the last ten years:

		1942 <sup>(1)</sup>	1957
Number of Schools	... ..	14	58
Number of Teachers	... ..	56	284
Total enrolment (boys and girls)		1,839	9,323

(c) The A.M.E. Zion Church: <sup>As in</sup> (2) Like the Roman Catholic Church, the school was the vanguard paving the way for the Zion Church. Bryant Small, an Afro-American chaplain in a merchant vessel, had called at the West Coast of Africa, was moved to pity the African in his 'heathenish plight' and thereupon promised that all being well, he was coming back to evangelize the country. Bryant Small (later Bishop Small) never came back; but the realization of his dreams found fulfilment in T.B. Freeman (the son of a pioneer Methodist missionary to the G.C.), who was instructed by him to assist in the establishment of an all-English school at Keta as the basis of Zion Missionary work.

In October 1898, Freeman was at Keta to survey the possibilities for the project, and in February the following year, the first Zion School (erroneously styled Wesleyan School) was opened with the glowing support of a public already educated on the practical values of an English education.

Rev. Freeman returned to Accra in 1901 and was succeeded by R.J.D. Taylor from Cape Coast. Under Rev. Taylor, the first Zion

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1. Figures for 1942 have been compiled from the files of the District Supervisor of Roman Catholic Schools.
  2. Information on the historical background of the Zion Church was compiled largely by discussion with Rev. W.A. Pomeyie. See also 'Gold Coast at a Glance' by C.C. Alleyne (a Bishop of the Zion Church).



Chapel was erected but the growth and expansion of the Church was left to his successor, Rev. J.J. Pearce, an Afro-American who took over from Taylor in 1907. Following Rev. Pearce was Dr. Shaw under whom the church began to make strides in and out of Keta. A station was opened at Penyi (an inland town) in 1908, and Agavedzi in 1909. Before Dr. Shaw returned to America in 1913, he had ordained two African Deacons, and succeeded in arranging for the education of three youngsters in America.

Between 1913 and 1930, a number of Afro-American missionaries came and went. Between 1930 and 1933 the whole Church was piloted by a lay African teacher. In 1933, a trained African minister returned from America to take charge. Two years later, yet another African trained minister was back to lend a hand. In 1935, three Africans were ordained as full ministers of the Church by a visiting Bishop from the mother Church in America. Thus in 1935, the church could count five ministers, three ordained locally and two from America.

Both church and school are managed by a District Superintendent (Pastor) who is responsible for the East Ghana Conference which is co-terminous with the whole of Eweland in the geographical T-V-T. The Superintendent is directly responsible to a residential Afro-American Bishop from the mother Church in the United States, who in turn is answerable to an executive body of A.M.E. Zion Bishops in America. (1)

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1. The A.M.E. Zion Church of America has twelve Bishops, each in charge of an Episcopal District. The twelfth episcopal district is the West African foreign field which includes the Zion Churches of Ghana, Nigeria and Liberia. In this foreign field, Cape Coast is the seat of the Bishop.

Today, the Church has within the Anlo State, 14 stations with nine ministers and a catechist. The enrolment is well over 6,000 including about a thousand communicants.

The school remains an invaluable arm of the church. There are at present 13 Primary schools, 76 teachers and an enrolment of 2,343 including 718 girls; there are five middle schools with 23 teachers and 655 pupils including 126 girls.<sup>(1)</sup>

(d) The Apostolic Churches: The word Apostolic, in the Anlo State, is become a generic term for a variety of churches with varying emphasis on the methods of the early Apostles of the Christian Church. Beginning as missionary churches with inspiration from America, today they have more of the features of separatist, "syncretistic" churches than orthodox missionary churches.

The Apostolic Churches include the Faith Tabernacle, the First Century Gospel, the Christ Apostolic and the Gold Coast (now Ghana) Apostolic Church in addition to a few of purely local importance. Sunday and week-day services are conducted in the homes of leading members of the church. The absence (or paucity) of public chapels along the lines of the orthodox missionary Churches has given impetus to the formation of a number of household Churches which appear to have no visible link with one another.

According to the oral information pieced together, the first Apostolic Church to be established in the State was the Faith Tabernacle Congregation in 1924. This was partially directed from America by a Rev. Clarke, Secretary to the Church. Towards the close of 1925, the Church in America suffered a schism when Rev.

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1. Pupil enrolment and teachers have been compiled from the 1957 pay-vouchers made available by the District Education Officer.

Clarke broke away to found a new Church, the First Century Gospel. The impression gained by the foreign friends of Rev. Clarke in the Anlo State was that the Faith Tabernacle had been rechristened First Century Gospel. As a result of this impression, Faith Tabernacle became First Century Gospel in Anlo in 1928. Later, the facts of the schism came to light and some of the churches reverted to the old name. Thus in the early 1930's, both Faith Tabernacle and First Century Gospel were in operation in the Anlo State.

In 1935 a group of elders (African) of the Christ Apostolic Church at Asamankese visited Keta and made efforts to amalgamate the First Century Gospel (with the Faith Tabernacle) and their own Church, the Christ Apostolic. Instead of the amalgamation sought, a new church - Christ Apostolic - was inaugurated.

Since the advent of the Christ Apostolic in 1935, several offshoots of the existing Apostolic Churches have sprung up because of grievances or dissatisfactions within the old guards, while new ones have crossed the Volta to swell the large number. These include the Pentecostal Grace Assembly, the Christian Assembly and a host of 'household churches' which simply go by the name 'Plaisee', the vernacular equivalent for 'Praise ye' identifiable with all Apostolic Churches.

Because of the household nature of these churches, a very accurate picture of membership as a whole is not possible within the scope of this thesis. However, the following are reliable facts elicited from a number of leaders. Today, there are Apostolic Churches of varying size in the nine administrative units or local council areas. The pioneer towns, Keta and Agbozome which led the way in embracing the new faith in the 1920's still lead in adherents, although there are close rivals. According to a pastor informant,

in the late 1920's and early 1930's, during revival meetings at Keta, members and seated sympathisers numbered well over 600. Most of these were members of the orthodox or established missionary churches. This aroused the resentment of the Pastors of the orthodox Churches and 'bulls of ex-communication' were issued against sympathisers and those of their own Church who had any connections with the Apostolic Church. This crippled open membership and drove a number of sympathisers underground. For, in spite of the attractions of the Apostolic Church, most members want to retain membership in the established churches. This double-membership has added to the difficulties of an accurate census of adherents.

In most towns and villages, membership is preponderantly female, much more than is the case in the established churches, and there are comparatively few open literate members. Too many men and literates are ashamed to identify themselves openly with a church where women, especially, illiterates hold reins of office. It is not surprising to find in a congregation of 20, only three to four adult males.

Practically all the members of the church - open and secret - have tales of a special conviction or religious experience impelling membership. Some have had special difficulties or privations in life and feel they have been delivered by God who wants them to rededicate their lives to the service of Christ. The tale is always a telling, moving, inspiring experience. One member, a staunch one, told of how he had been saved from a heavy debt and the persecution of creditors. God miraculously stayed the hand of his creditors and persecutors, found him a job and made it possible for him to liquidate his debt within a relatively short time. Another

was saved mysteriously from committing suicide. Just on the verge of the act, there is a vision, a falling unconscious and the abandonment of the act. In more dramatic experiences, the noose is securely wound around the neck....then the fall from the tree. Before the feet could touch the ground, an unseen hand removes the noose and he lies prostrate on the ground. In other instances, an only son or daughter is fallen sick; all therapeutic devices prove abortive. Then an apostolic faith healer lays his hand upon the child, and as if by the miracle that it is given to be, there is a sudden dramatic healing.

These revelations or professions make profound impressions upon heathens, and Christians of other denominations. Of similar effect on the heathen spectator are the revelations made during meetings. A member declares a brother or sister member in possession of witchcraft, without naming the culprit; seconds later, there is a response of full confession from a member of the group. This claim to extra-sensory perception or the ability to probe the minds of others has proved to be an armour of strength against infidelity or the disloyalty of members to the Church in a way that is unknown to the established ones. The disloyal member can be detected by mortal eyes.

The church functionaries include elders, pastors, prophets and prophetesses and healers. Besides his special calling, each is an adept preacher.

In all the Apostolic Churches, adult baptism is by immersion, and the emphasis is on healing by faith and prayer.

An Apostolic revival meeting attracts large crowds of members and spectators. The heathens find in their music and the

'speaking with tongues' comparisons with 'possession' during drumming and dancing.

(e) Other Churches of <sup>a</sup> missionary tinge in the Anlo State include the Salvation Army and the Anglican Church. Both are of fairly recent introduction to Anlo.

The Anglican Church has stations at Agbozome and Penyi. There is a residential full-time priest at Agbozome. He is also in charge of the Penyi station. The Church has two primary schools with an enrolment of 322 and eleven teachers.

The Salvation Army is known at Woe where it operates a school with an enrolment of 135 pupils and five teachers.

(f) The Apostolic Revelation Society: This is a separatist Christian church with "syncretistic" leanings. The founder of the Church began his religious career as an evangelist of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. He organized prayer-groups as the nucleus of his evangelistic activities. On 2nd November, 1939, a School was founded and attached to the prayer-group. Prophet C.K.N. Wovenu, for such is the name of the founder, soon found himself withdrawing from the Presbyterian fold and founding a new faith at Tadzewu, now the headquarters of the new budding Christian faith, the Apostolic Revelation Society. According to the 'prophet' himself, the prayer group and the primary school of 24 pupils formed the basis of the Society.

Begun as an all-African enterprise in the then relatively backward and predominantly heathen community, and with hardly any moral or financial support from the government or any church organization, it was no mean task for Wovenu to keep Church and School together. In spite of a painfully slow progress, he did



weather the storm. By 19th June 1949, the first pastors, seventeen in number, were consecrated by the Prophet, besides the appointment of four ecclesiastical judges. In 1952 the school was approved for a grant by the Ministry of Education. These were significant milestones.

Today, the A.R.S. has 17 stations within the Anlo State, including Dzodze, Anyako, Anloga, Agbozome, Keta. It has a total membership of about 1500 under the spiritual guidance of 24 pastors, excluding the Prophet himself.<sup>(1)</sup>

The school at Tadzewu, the headquarters has an enrolment of 230 (including 73 girls) with a teaching staff of 7. Besides its Primary and Middle Schools, the Society has its own Theological College for the training of pastors. It also runs a commercial school.

A clinic open to everybody is maintained. The hamlet set aside for the purpose - about a mile away from town - has about eighty to a hundred inhabitants. The prophet himself, skilled in herbal remedies, is the chief physician. The patients are nursed both bodily and spiritually. There is a chapel in the hamlet. The emphasis in treatment is always on intense prayer.

The prophet himself is the life-blood of the Society's efficient organization. At the headquarters (Tadzewu), the Clinic, the Society's farms, the School and the Church are directly under his supervision. The Pastors of the out-stations are also directly responsible to him. In these obligations, he has various

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1. The African World (magazine) of July, 1957 puts the total membership of the church in Ghana as a whole at 60,000 and 150 congregations or stations with 52 pastors of the Society. Apparently, these figures have a slight tinge of journalistic hyperbole.

committees for assistance and advice.

Besides a large Chapel (the 'house of God') at Tadzewu, there is an imposing concrete two storey house in erection. The portion completed houses the offices, library, and dwelling of the Prophet. It is tastefully decorated with marbles and the furniture is of some of the best cabinet woods obtainable in Ghana.

Unlike the orthodox and the Apostolic Churches, all members are communicants at baptism which is by sprinkling (and not by immersion). Members, however, pass through stages. After baptism, the equivalent of the first sacrament, confirmation follows as the second sacrament; then there is the anointment or unction. A first and second "ordination" to the ministry bring the member closest to the Prophet himself spiritually.

Restricted polygyny<sup>(1)</sup> which is tolerated, is no bar to holy communion. There are no regular Sunday collections, but each member is privileged to give freely of his means according to his own convictions. Tradesmen and artisans who have been cured by the prophet are reluctant to leave him; when they stay, they do so with their services.<sup>(2)</sup>

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1. A polygamist baptised into membership of the A.R.S. is not obliged to forsake all but one of his wives. Rather, his responsibility to the wives is defined and made explicit to him. If later, the need arises for taking on an additional wife, this must be signified by written application for the approval of the committee on marriage and the Prophet himself. An application may be turned down.
  2. The materials on the A.R.S. have been collected by hours of personal interview with the Prophet assisted by a select committee of senior pastors and supplemented by the Prophet's own vernacular book on the history of the founding of the Society. I have also made use of my own knowledge acquired long before the initiation of this research.

The A.R.S. appears to have no axe to grind with African customs or culture. It allows restricted polygyny and believes that the African culture may be adapted to Christianity in such a way as to give the latter a local indigenous colour. Yewe rhythms and local songs heretofore looked upon as "pagan" and unworthy of Christian lips are being usefully applied to Christian themes. It is in this sense - to blend Christianity with aspects of indigenous African culture - that the A.R.S. has features of a "syncretistic" religious denomination.

(2)

THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY: A SOCIOLOGICAL  
REVIEW

From the information available on the various denominations functioning in Anlo, it is obvious that Christianity has been rapidly gaining ground. There are at least three firmly established mission churches in the field each of which has known at least sixty years of missionary labour in Anlo. In recent years, the Apostolic Churches, including a purely "syncretistic" one, have been bustling with activity.

The statistics on the progress of the Roman Catholic Church indicate that enrolment has increased by 500% within the last twenty years, and within the same period, the number of stations has more than doubled. This is symptomatic of the general progress of Christianity in Anlo.

On Sundays, all the Churches are filled to capacity, at least in the urban parts of the State. At Keta, more than 50% of the total population of 11,000 are regular church-goers. In fact, literates in town are products of mission schools and maintain some sort of liaison with the church.

From the evidences made available by the Pastors of the various churches, church attendance on the whole - i.e. for the littoral as well as the interior - is very fair. In the rural areas and the villages bordering the lagoon, factors such as the food-quest and general poverty of land and people militate slightly against brisk church attendance.

As to the sociological background of members, membership of the churches represents a fair cross-section of the local community. Of the adult membership, those from average homes are in the majority. People who can ill afford to dress presentably on Sundays generally find not much attraction <sup>in</sup> for Christianity or church attendance. Along the littoral, membership includes, preponderantly, women petty traders. Literacy is very much on the increase among church-goers. About 90% of the Church-goers are able to sing from the vernacular hymn books. The percentage is slightly lower in the interior. In the A.M.E. Zion Church at Keta where English hymns are regularly sung at service, a large number of women have been taught at Sunday Schools to sing the English hymns. Their articulate pronunciation at Church is marvellous.

The Church maintains steady progress in adherents because it continues to offer incentives which keep members abreast of the times. By itself, it is a symbol of "civilization".

Some of the incentives for membership include the education that the Church offers, the attractions for ceremonial, especially in the Roman Catholic Church, the feeling of belonging to an enlightened group, opportunities for personal exhibition, and above all, Christian religion as a fashion of the present day. Of

course, no Christian initiate would lay claim to any of these incentives as a factor impelling membership of the church. There are the more 'permanent', glorious, high-sounding incentives of a 'genuine search after truth', the peace of mind deriving from the worship of one God and the quest for salvation. There is also the factor of divine healing among the Apostolic members.

<sup>The description of the</sup>  
 A Christian religion as a 'fashion of the present day' requires elucidation. I have witnessed scores of instances in which pagans in the villages have shown keen interest in church festival, and offered services to the church, not so much out of a genuine motive to be of service to an alien religious organization as of the desire to participate in an enlightened village programme.

At Anloga, for instance, during the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of the church there in September, 1956, pagan groups strove to out-bid each other in voluntary contributions towards the completion of a large concrete Chapel.<sup>(1)</sup>

Similarly, church anniversaries, harvest thanksgiving, church 'rallies' are becoming more and more a village-wide affair, something of communal interest. In one village beyond the Keta lagoon (xi), a church anniversary was recently celebrated by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church there. It is customary on such occasions to invite representative church groups from neighbouring villages to enhance the success of the day. That other churches were going to be represented immediately changed the tenor of the local celebration. It became a village affair. Days before the event, the pagan village chief caused the whole village to be swept

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1. Both the local Yewe leaders and representatives of the association of bokowo (diviners) each gave five guineas towards the completion of the chapel.

clean; male and female adults were assessed, and the sum of money realised was deposited with the church as the village's contribution towards the success of the day. It was simply wonderful to see pagans working hand in hand with Christians as though they belonged to the same Christian organization.

The fact emerging from this co-operation is that pagans (even when they show no inclination for Christian doctrines) have come to look upon such festivals as eye-openers for the entire village and are unwilling to be robbed of their fair share. It is a foregone conclusion that missionaries seize upon such sympathetic gestures to make converts.

During the pagan weed-off ceremonies and the outdooing of a chief, it is becoming fashionable for families to cause announcements to be made at church, and or attend service in a variety of colourful attires.

The implication is that the pagan community is becoming tolerant of the Church, not for its doctrines, nor for its 'message of hope and salvation', but for its external attractions, the opportunities for communal participation and personal exhibitionism; above all, the church is a symbol of education, of "enlightenment" and "civilization".

### (3)

#### CHRISTIANITY AND THE TRADITIONAL RELIGION

To discuss Christianity in relation to the indigenous religion it will be necessary to indicate the main ideas that underline the teachings of the missionary, of course, without involving ourselves in theological disputations which properly lie outside the



universe of discourse of science. We may list the following as the ideas the missionary endeavours to inculcate:-

- (a) Monotheism or belief in one God, the Christian Jahweh.
- (b) Moral precepts as crystallized by the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament and the doctrine of the "brotherhood of man" of the New Testament.
- (c) Sin as involving a disregard of the will of the Christian Jahweh.
- (d) A stoic indifference to earthly life.
- (e) Salvation and the life hereafter.
- (f) Baptism as implying a renunciation of a wide field of traditional culture.
- (g) Renunciation of polygyny or the plurality of wives.

While some of these teachings directly or indirectly complement the African's own indigenous religious concepts, others are clearly and unequivocally a negation. Perhaps the most destructive single factor in Christianity is the uncompromising stand of the missionary who believes that his religion is entirely opposed to the indigenous religious institutions and social customs and that it is his responsibility to supplant these. It is this concept, more than the Biblical ideological conflicts which immensely contributes to the breakdown of tribal codes, to social disorganization and to individual maladjustment, especially in circumstances where some of the members of a lineage convert to Christianity and others remain in paganism. The African is made to feel that he must renounce the essence of his African background in order to become a genuine Christian. Mair hits the point in respect of the Baganda when she writes:

"Christian missionaries have set their faces against all the patently 'uncivilized' aspects of native culture, whether or not they were directly forbidden by the Scriptures: they have opposed polygamy, slavery, the payment of bride-price, initiation ceremonies, dancing, wailing at funerals, and the belief in magic, along with human sacrifice and the exposure of twins, as all being equally repugnant to a civilization in which mechanical warfare is a recognized institution".<sup>(1)</sup>

(4)

#### EDUCATION

Like the Church, the establishment of formal educational institutions in Anlo is already a century old. It was in February of 1855 when the Bremen (German) missionaries opened the first school at Keta; that was barely two years after the foundation of the church. Thereafter, the history of the church was the history of the school. Other denominations - the Roman Catholic in 1890 and the A.M.E. Zion in 1899 - opened schools as a means to the church. From the inception of organized educational institutions, therefore, the schools have been an integral part of the church. The schools fed the church with adherents and the church mothered and indoctrinated the school. This symbiotic association offers no salvation to the traditional values and beliefs. It undermined the indigenous religion. But this undercut is not to be restricted

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1. Lucy Mair, An African People in the 20th Century, London, 1934, p.3.

to the mission schools. The purely secular institutions of recent development likewise exert their mitigating influence on indigenous religious practice. In the following paragraphs are discussed the content of education in Anlo with particular regard to its present function, and relation to the indigenous Anlo religious beliefs and practices.

Education began at Keta in 1855 by the manumission of slaves at a cost of thirteen shillings and five pence each. So acute was the problem of pupil shortage in the school that the missionaries had to resort to the purchase of slaves. When the circumstances of a completely free education - free tuition, free books and utensils, free uniforms - were added to the cost of manumission, education must have been one of the enormously expensive enterprises of the time. Evidences pointed to the fact that expense was no deterrent. It must have been extremely gratifying to the missionaries when, with the passage of time and the continued interaction of Europeans and Africans, the social and economic advantages of education began to dawn in Anlo. Today, when there are over 180 primary and middle schools, over 800 teachers, with an enrolment over 25,000, plus two secondary schools with an enrolment well over 400, the demand for more schools grows insatiable.

The following statistics of Primary and Middle Schools indicate totals of schools, teachers, enrolment and management:

(1)

PRIMARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

<u>Management</u>	<u>Total of Schools</u>	<u>Total of Teachers</u>	<u>Total Enrolment</u>
Evangelical Presby- terian Church ...	57	271	8,359
Roman Catholic Church	58	284	9,323
African Methodist Epis- copal Zion Church.	18	99	2,998
Other Churches ...	5	23	687
Local Authority (or Urban) Co. ...	<u>51</u>	<u>194</u>	<u>4,032</u>
Total ...	189	871	25,399

The statistics above indicate that the influence of the churches in education is still predominant. Of the 189 schools, 138 are managed by missions; of the 871 teachers, mission schools provide 677; of the 25,399 pupils, mission schools are responsible for 21,367. Mission schools, teachers and enrolment work out at 73%, 78% and 84% respectively. This implies that a large percentage of the educated sons and daughters of Anlo still pass through the "protective canopy" of varying Christian religious influence.

Both Primary and Middle schools educate on the elementary, pre-secondary school level. Each primary school provides a six-year basic course for all children at public expense<sup>(2)</sup> and has as its aim the provision of a "sound foundation for citizenship with permanent literacy in both English and Vernacular".<sup>(3)</sup>

On the successful completion of the primary school, the

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1. Statistics compiled from the 1957 pay-vouchers of schools at the District Education Office. Detailed information on privately managed schools are not available. There are at least 15 schools privately managed, with an enrolment of 460 pupils. See Education Statistics 1956 (Statistical Reports No.3).
  2. Fee-payment in primary schools was abolished as from 1st January, 1952.
  3. See the Accelerated Development Plan for Education, 1954, p.1. (Government Publication).

pupil enters a Middle school for four years whence he is fitted for entry into a secondary school. If he is intelligent, he 'matri-  
culates' for admission to one of the Secondary schools, just a year or two later. Otherwise, he completes the Middle school and enters a Technical school. Pupils pay fees in Middle and Secondary schools.

Courses taught in both Primary and Middle schools include English, Arithmetic, a variety of courses which come under the label of General Knowledge, Vernacular which is partly the medium of instruction in the Primary School.<sup>(1)</sup> Religious instruction in the Local Council Schools is optional. It is important in the mission schools where it is made compulsory for pupils belonging to the school's denomination, <sup>and even</sup> as well as for the unbaptised pupils.<sup>(2)</sup>

Admission to the schools is not on the basis of religious affiliation, though some preference may be given to the children of members of the church and potential converts, especially where there is shortage of places.

The school brings together children of heterogeneous background. Pagans and Christian children of the various denominations - orthodox, Apostolic and separatist - represented in the district are here. Some are of literate and semi-literate parents, others of stark illiterate parents. In the interior, children are more likely to be predominantly of illiterate parents. The background of the children will vary according to the community of the

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1. As of 1958, the Government hopes to introduce English as the medium of instruction in the Primary school. This will make possible the entry into secondary schools on the completion of the primary school, according to the statement of the Minister of Education.
  2. In the mission secondary school at Dzelukofe the study of Religious Knowledge as a course is obligatory. All students are expected to offer the course as a basic requirement in the first two to three years.

school. In an urban, littoral school such as Keta, one would expect a high percentage of pupils baptised in their infancy, their parents of literate or semi-literate standing, and most of these engaged in clerical and semi-clerical jobs including petty trading. In their own child-like ways, the children bring their varied social background to bear on one another.

Once <sup>having</sup> admitted <sup>him</sup>, the (mission) school, exerts influence in a variety of ways, not excluding persuasion, to convert the non-Christian pupil. Sunday Schools and religious plays and entertainments, public recitation of biblical texts, are some of the inducements for the non-Christian pupil. He feels cheated when he is left out because of his religious standing. To own a "Christian name" is by itself a mark of distinction at school. To tease a child who has no such name is to inflict a social stigma. By these methods the mission schools serve as instrument of evangelization, though the Roman Catholic schools appear to use such instruments to greater advantage than the Protestant schools.

There are no teacher-training institutions in the State, but the co-ordination of educational policy in the country as a whole, makes it possible for teachers who have had training in government and mission colleges elsewhere to secure appointments in the schools of the Anlo State. Until recently, as a factor in the Christian nurture of their wards, mission schools have placed enormous emphasis on the training of prospective teachers in mission teacher-training Colleges. In the Presbyterian field, qualified teachers had to undergo a year of further training in a theological seminary. They qualified as catechists. Thus the better qualified teachers, i.e. those who hold 'Certificate A' or have been through four years of training in a training College, begin their



teaching career as catechists as well. The practice appears to have been discontinued.

Today, out of a total of 871 teachers, about 477 are trained.<sup>(1)</sup> This implies that less than 50% of teachers have entered the teaching field on the satisfactory completion of the Middle Four School leaving examination now conducted by the West African Examination Council.

The policy of the Ministry of Education, now being implemented by the Local Councils is to avoid undue concentration of educational facilities in parts of the district to the neglect of others. The following statistics illustrating the distribution of primary and middle schools in the various council areas, indicate the extent to which the policy is being pursued:

<u>Council</u>	<u>Primary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>Total</u> <sup>(2)</sup>
Aflao ... ..	7	3	10
Avenor ... ..	37	2	34
Anlo Central. ...	14	3	17
Dzodze ... ..	9	3	12
Keta Urban .. ...	11	9	20
Anlo North .. ...	13	5	18
Somé ... ..	17	7	24
Anlo South .. ...	20	4	24
Wheta/Apipe/Klikor.	22	2	24

All schools - primary and middle - are under the immediate

1. There are three categories of trained teachers: there are the holders of (i) Certificate B who have been through two years of training in an approved College on the completion of the middle school; (ii) Certificate A who have been through four years of training (iii) Post Secondary who have been through two years of training after a secondary education.

At the bottom of the scale of trained teachers is the External Certificated teacher who after a period of untrained apprenticeship in the classroom as a teacher, sits for an examination in lieu of training in a College, which if he passes, entitles him to the status of a subordinate certificated teacher.

2. Statistics compiled from 1957 pay-vouchers of schools.

surveillance of a District Education Officer who is answerable to a superior officer at Ho, the regional headquarters (of T-V-T). The District Education Officer is assisted by a number of Assistant Education Officers who are more or less in regular touch with the schools.

Besides the Primary and Middle Schools there are at Keta two secondary schools, the Zion College of West Africa and the Keta Secondary School. The former was established by a Zion Church minister, the Rev. Dr. F.K. Fiawoo in October 1937 at Anloga, but has been removed to Keta since 1953 at the instance of a riot<sup>(1)</sup> which threatened widescale annihilation of persons and properties. The latter, a day school, was established by the Government in 1953 as part of its programme of the acceleration of education throughout the country. It has an enrolment of 150 with ten masters.

The Zion College has an enrolment of 250 students with 15 masters, including five graduates of British and American universities. A limited survey was conducted by the writer to learn something of the social background of the students, of their knowledge of indigenous religious beliefs and practices and the extent of participation in communal ritual.<sup>(2)</sup>

On the background of students of the first year, information elicited included age of respondent, the religious affiliation of respondent and parents (or guardians), the occupation and literacy of parents, respondent's natal home and the scene of early formal

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1. The riot in question is touched upon in a later chapter.
  2. Students' attitudes to indigenous religious concepts are discussed statistically in a later chapter.

education. There were 50 respondents in the first form out of which 31 were selected as relevant to the study because these came from the area under enquiry - southern Eweland.<sup>(1)</sup>

The ages of the 31 respondents range from 16 to 19 with a mean of 18; all are baptised Christians, and with the exception of six, parents are equally Christian. As to literacy and occupation of parents there are 21 literates, 18 of whom are engaged in clerical jobs such as teaching and store-keeping; 10 are illiterates and 13 are engaged in non-clerical jobs such as farming, fishing, petty-trading. Nearly all the 31 respondents have had their elementary education within the Anlo State.

Since the first formers are not atypical of students in the other forms, we may conclude that a large majority of students are Christian and that a fair percentage come from Christian homes. We may further conclude that there is, at least, a selective process by which Christian parents are stimulated to offer advanced formal education to their children.

All in all, there have been marvellous strides in Education within the last ten years. The 1954 accelerated plan for education has come to double and redouble educational institutions; there has been a remarkable improvement in pupil enrolment, a significant increase in the output of trained personnel. This means a higher percentage of literacy and greater identification with European patterns of behaviour.

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1. The selection was made possible by the information on natal home. In the answer of questionnaire, students were asked not to reveal their identity, in order to ensure the validity of answers.

(5)

EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND INDIGENOUS  
VALUES

As noted in the earlier paragraphs of this chapter, European education is largely a part of the program of missionaries. Obviously, education is more closely linked with Christian teachings than with indigenous values. Some of the conflicts of Christianity with the indigenous culture will evidently find expression in education.

But, aside from Christian influence, formal education is, by itself, utterly different from the indigenous African upbringing. Whereas the young African acquires knowledge and skill largely by imitation of senior siblings and elders, the European acquires formal training which may be distinct from the process of socialization at home. The scientific and rational approach to education sharply contrasts with the indigenous kind of upbringing. The one seeks to understand natural phenomena by the cause-effect relationship, the other by intuition and magic which does not stand the scientific cause-effect scrutiny. Thus the proper assimilation of the scientific approach may be the means of revolutionizing the African's world outlook.

Westermann contrasts the individual and personal nature of Western education with the indigenous informal system:

"European education has in abundance the personal and individualistic note lacking in the Native educational idea. African tribal life and European School education are in their present forms incompatible,

and this should be clearly borne in mind. The older people in Africa feel it strongly. When, nevertheless, they send their children to school it is because they realize that it is impossible for them to stem the rising tide, and that a new world is coming.<sup>(1)</sup>"

In an evaluation of social change and its bearing on Education in Africa, Professor Read writes in a similar critical condemnatory vein:

"In the earliest contacts of British educationists with African peoples, they were confident that they were bringing a superior as well as a dominant culture with them, and they proceeded to teach their religion, the three R's and new forms of social life. It was not until after the First World War that any widespread serious doubts arose about educational policy and the content of the curriculum."<sup>(2)</sup>"

This disparity has ushered in the "question of the divorce of modern schooling from African culture, and its disintegrating effect upon the African communities."<sup>(3)</sup> In this section of the chapter are discussed some of the effects of the modern system of education on indigenous religious practice.

Perhaps it might be easier to assess the effect of education on overt behaviour than on the actual content of indigenous religious belief and practice. At school the African is inevitably brought into contact with ideas which tend to water, discredit or

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1. Westermann, The African Today and Tomorrow, London, 1949, p.102.
  2. Margaret Read, Education and Social Change in Tropical Areas, London, 1955, p.104.
  3. Ibid.

cast doubts on indigenous religious beliefs. Cherished traditional beliefs may now be explained away as superstitions: rainfall may no longer depend on the whims and caprices of the tro-priest, the boko or the medicineman; it is the 'result of evaporation and condensation in the clouds'. Thunder and lightning may likewise no longer represent the bullet 'shots' of a displeased Yewe tro-So (or Xebieso); lightning is now caused by the 'discharge of electricity between two electrified regions of cloud', while thunder is but the 'sound that accompanies the lightning caused by the sudden heating and expansion of the air along the path of the lightning flash'. Thus the pupil emerges from school "to look down on the old life as something left behind".<sup>(1)</sup> But, of course, in the Primary and Middle Schools - primarily the level of education attainable by the large majority of the sons and daughters of Anlo - the quality or the standard of education is not such as to affect easily such deep-rooted beliefs. It takes a more advanced and specialised education to interpret physical phenomena rationally. It is the prestige accorded by education, the material gains that must follow education as a matter of course, the new environment in which the educated finds himself and the artificial hedges he creates around himself that contribute effectively to a reshaping of his ideas on his traditional beliefs and notions.

Education has become increasingly popular in Anlo because to the youth it is the gateway to the world of the white man. The educated become assistants to Europeans in administration, commerce and industry. As Professor Busia remarks in regard to the

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1. Westermann, op.cit., p.115.



educated in Ashanti, educated people 'are employed as clerks, teachers, cocoa-brokers, shopkeepers. They have a high prestige in the community due to their wealth, occupation, or literacy, and they seek to exercise an effective influence in the political and social life of the community corresponding to their enhanced status.'<sup>(1)</sup> Education, perhaps much more than the church, is a symbol of "enlightenment", or "civilization".

One factor which accelerates the estrangement of formal European education from the indigenous Anlo culture is the tendency of the educated to find his future, not in the natal village community, but in a commercial centre where he has the scope for making money. In the absence of cash crops and European industries in the villages, a large number of the educated youths realise their ambitions only at Accra, the country's capital, and other metropolitan centres such as Takoradi, Sekondi, Kumasi. A few find clerical job opportunities at Keta, the district headquarters.

Away from home, new vistas open to him. He joins a new social organisation in his urban centre which is based on association, principally by occupation. As Dr. Little puts it in his Study of Social Change in British West Africa, "the fact that many kinship groups are no longer economically self-sufficient impairs their solidarity for other social purposes, and the result is that occupational and other associations which cut across tribal and kinship lines have taken over many of the activities previously performed by the extended family, the lineage and similar traditional organizations".<sup>(2)</sup>

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1. Busia, The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti, London, 1951, p.132.
  2. K.L. Little, "The Study of Social Change in British West Africa", Africa, Vol.23 (Oct. 1953), p.279.

Away from home, within new associations with their impact of new ideas, and the new ways of doing things - the attempts to imitate the European as closely as possible - the severance of indigenous religious ties may be but a matter of time.

Finally, there is the question of education by the mission schools. The youth from a mission school emerges with the aura of Christian influence. He introduces a new order of life, and in as much as his life is led not in a wholly Christian environment, but with pagans, he breaks the cultural continuity or stability of his society. Thus, even "under the most favourable circumstances it is inevitable that the religious and educative work of missions will have a disintegrative effect on Native institutions".<sup>(1)</sup>

In the Period of Transition (i.e. Chapters 6 and 7), we have surveyed the impact of European culture on indigenous Anlo culture, with particular regard to the indigenous religious institutions. The following are some of our main points in outline:

(i) The introduction of a market economy and the operation of monetary motives have introduced new values in conflict with indigenous religious concepts.

(ii) The solidarity of the traditional organization based on the lineage, the family or the local community is threatened and disrupted.

(iii) The emergence of new religious associations cutting across kinship and tribal lines and offering new ideas in conflict with the old.

In Part III, the Contemporary Scene, we shall examine the effects of this disorganization of traditional patterns on the indigenous religious structure and function.

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1. Westermann, op.cit., p.111.

## P A R T     I I I

THE MODERN SCENECHAPTER VIIIAnlo Traditional Cults Today

Following the discussion on the nature of contact - the change from subsistence economy and cowrie currency to Western economy, the levelling force of new political administration, the iconoclastic influence of modern formal education, the growing expansion of Christianity with its ban upon things non-Christian - one might conclude that the die is cast for the complete disintegration of pagan institutions and the development of Christian substitutes. In the light of existing materials, however, such an inference or deduction is entirely premature, if not inadequate. In spite of evident social changes and the weakening of old socio-religious bonds, existing institutions do not suggest a trend to a complete break with the old. This leads us to a basic consideration of our concept of change.

"Culture contact" or "social change" necessarily involves some change, but must that change be strictly measurable in terms of the European or African culture? Perhaps the whole concept of measuring the product of contact in terms of an either..or is inadequate. Contact, as the word might suggest, involves a world of change in which two factors are working together and producing a new type of culture related both to Europe and Africa

and yet not a mere copy of either.<sup>(1)</sup> In other words, the cultural component of change is neither purely European nor purely African. Similarly, with particular reference to changes in the social structure, new forms of grouping emerge as an adaptation to the interaction of the old and the new. In structure and function these new groupings are neither purely African nor purely European. As products of change, they have their own features; they are different from the interacting elements. "Social change" must, therefore, be viewed in a wider context than the native institution or the impinging culture. The student of "social change" must be able to see not merely beyond a disorganized traditional institution, but also beyond the European factors of change.

For the purpose of analysis, we shall delineate three interrelated methods as relevant to our discourse in the modern scene.

(i) The emergence of new institutions, and new social groupings of an associational nature.

(ii) "Syncretism": the syncretic form and function of the new institutions and new social groupings.

(iii) The individual's difficulties in adapting to a new situation.

(i) The emergence of new institutions and new social groupings of an associational nature: Some anthropologists have, in the past, placed considerable emphasis on disintegration in

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1. Malinowski, "Introductory Essay", Methods of Study of Culture Contact in Africa, International African Institute Memorandum (Reprinted from Africa, Vols. VII, VIII, IX) p.vii.

their study of "social change". Arriving in the field when contact was relatively new, they saw the traditional structure being forcibly wrenched away under the impact of the European elements. Disintegration was evidently so devastating that they saw nothing else. While acknowledging the inevitability of disintegration in all circumstances of contact, it is essential to recognise that "the reintegration is just as essential for an understanding of change as the investigation of disintegration."<sup>(1)</sup> As Dr. Little puts it, in particular reference to urbanization, the detribalized person does not retreat into a vacuum. "If the 'regenerative' part of the process did not occur, 'detribalization' itself would lack meaning because there would be no alternative organization in which the so-called detribalized individual could participate."<sup>(2)</sup>

The social structure of any society in contact is thus a product of disintegration and reintegration. As the old structures break down, new ones are built up, so that there is a continual process of elimination by substitution. We have already discussed how a money economy disrupts traditional social relations; but it must be noted that as the traditional lineage relations break down, the new forms of economy bring the members of the closely-knit kinship group into a wider context of social relations. If the lineage no longer offers the traditional securities, the individual is eventually absorbed by a voluntary association which is, in effect, a modern replacement of the traditional lineage. If the

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1. J. Hogbin, Social Change, London, 1958, p.53.
  2. Little, "The Study of Social Change in British West Africa", Africa, Vol.23 (1953), p.280.

traditional cult no longer affords an escape from the realities of life, members may propitiate the Christian deity where the Church performs the traditional roles of the lineage and the local community in a new way. (1)

Thus the acculturative process is simultaneously one of 'regeneration' as well as 'degeneration' in which a particular form of social organization is added to or replaced by other forms of organization. (2) An important feature of the new organizations is the trend to an associational structure - the development of organizations in which membership is voluntary and status achieved. This form of organization - not entirely new to the Anlo society - draws away the emphasis from the predominantly involuntary structure where membership is by birth and status is ascribed.

(ii) 'Syncretism' (3): If the analysis of reintegration is just as essential as the analysis of disintegration, as we have observed, it is equally important to understand the structure of the reintegrated institution vis-à-vis the interacting elements. Is the product of contact merely a choice between African and European elements?

It is known that Africans reject certain features of European culture, in spite of the efforts of the colonizing powers

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1. It is not suggested here that there is, as it were, a movement from one polar end to the other - a movement from a disorganized traditional institution to a virile Western institution. As will become evident in subsequent sections, a gradual process of interaction produces a blend of the old and the new.
  2. Little, op.cit.,
  3. 'Syncretism' as applied throughout Part III has the meaning of 'fusion'. The process may be analogous to a chemical action in which fusion of two original elements produces a new compound. See also E.H. Spicer, "Spanish-Indian Acculturation in the South-West", American Anthropologist, Vol.56: 663-678.



to reduce the African's own culture to European prototypes. A blind acceptance of the European institution without local modifications has never been feasible. There is rejection or acceptance of parts of the new culture to the same extent that the exigencies of the new situation compel the retention or discard of elements of the African's own culture. Motives underlying this process vary according to the nature of the contact situation. There are the pressures of the colonizing power, the ability<sup>(1)</sup> of the African to resist or accept change, the prestige factor, the desire to adjust to new circumstances and to eliminate conflicts.

Thus in spite of the 'inspired' zeal of the missionary or the administrator to eliminate 'peculiar' African customs, the African culture is never entirely stampeded by the European culture. Local conditions compel modifications from time to time in the European ideal. Take Christianity, for example. Conventional European Christianity interacting with African culture emerges in a new jacket that is neither African nor purely European. The mushroom independent churches of Africa, outgrowths of orthodox mission churches, are typical examples.<sup>(2)</sup> Even the mission churches which sincerely believe that they are functioning in strict conformity with conventional European Christianity are in practice quite alien to both cultures. For example, ancestor worship is rarely completely dead among Christians, nor are witchcraft and "magic".<sup>(3)</sup> These survive in the 'collective conscious-

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1. This ability will vary according to the social structure and the extent of the Western impact.
  2. See B. Sundkler, Bantu Prophets in South Africa, London, 1948.
  3. Monica Hunter, "An African Christian Morality", Africa, Vol.10 (1937), pp.265-292.

ness' of the Christianized African; under stress of emotional crisis, such beliefs become stronger than the alien creed.<sup>(1)</sup>

Studies of the religious institutions of the New World Negroes have also revealed certain "fetish cult" retentions, carry-overs from their original African background, in spite of a cultural break of two centuries.<sup>(2)</sup> While this smacks more of an 'enculturation' - to use Herskovits' terminology - than 'acculturation', it emphasizes the "syncretic" tendency in the contact of cultures.

In West Africa, as Dr. Banton has observed, Africans are attempting to create a modern, yet specifically African culture.<sup>(3)</sup> The West African leader who declaims the development of an "African Personality", does not necessarily advocate the resuscitation of African culture in its tribal exclusiveness. What is obviously implied by the "African Personality" is the creation of distinctively African patterns of behaviour but within the modern framework of education, parliamentary democracy, commerce and industry. This is obviously a syncretic ideal.

These modern tendencies emphasize the point that the cultural component of change is one of "syncretism", a fusion of the original European and African elements. In the next section we shall examine the motives - conscious and unconscious - for this kind of development.

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1. Malinowski, op.cit., p.xxvii.
  2. See M.J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, New York, 1941; "African Gods and Catholic Saints in New World Negro Belief", *American Anthropologist*, Vol.39 (1937); the *Contribution of Afro-American Studies to Africanist Research*, *American Anthropologist*, Vol.50, No.1, Pt.1 (1948).
  3. *West African City*, London, 1957, p.218.

(iii) The individual's difficulties in adapting to a new situation: No study of "social change" in Africa can afford to ignore the intensely human problems that confront the African in the process of adaptation to a new situation. While agreeing with Fortes that the role of the ethnographer must be one of description,<sup>(1)</sup> at the same time we cannot lose sight of the value of analysis in observation. The ethnographer must serve the double role of accurate observer and intelligent interpreter. "He must", to quote Schapera from his own field observations among the Kxatla of Bechuanaland, "analyse the situation as he finds it, and determine why contact with the European has modified the traditional culture of the Natives along certain lines and why the Natives have reacted in certain ways to the new influences bearing upon them. He must explain why certain Native institutions seem to have either disappeared completely or lost their vitality, while others still flourish ... He must consider how far there has been blending or adaptation".<sup>(2)</sup> Whatever the merits of a disinterestedly scientific approach, science in "social change" must be tempered by a practical approach which essays to understand the difficulties of adaptation to a new situation, if not find their solutions.

We have earlier observed that "social change" is a product of disintegration and reintegration. But reintegration does not necessarily imply that there will be a ready acceptance of the new substitutes. As Hogbin points out, new relationships

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1. "Culture Contact as a Dynamic Process", Africa, Vol.IX, pp.24-55.
  2. Hogbin, op.cit. p.52.

are necessarily experimental and for a time there is bound to be a 'heavy turnover'; they are permanently accepted only after a period of trial. The interregnum - between disintegration and the acceptance of the reintegrated substitute - may be marked by moral conflicts and "social disequilibrium".

Without any intention of taking sides in the Wilsons-Leach controversy over the concept "social disequilibrium",<sup>(1)</sup> we may claim that there is some justification for labelling a society (or group) as in a state of maladjustment or "social disequilibrium" when an innovation has not yet been fully accepted. In such a state of society, the individual experiences conflicts; so does the group. Take for example the case of an enforced change in legal sanctions. There are moral conflicts where the dominant people declare wrong in law things which the subject people have not learned to think wrong.<sup>(2)</sup> The Christian finds himself in a dilemma when he is obliged to choose between the advice of the missionary and traditional usage in matters of marriage, medicine, etc. There is nearly always difficulty in a complete break with the past. No doubt many Africans, especially Christians, are saddled with a guilty conscience. These conflicts and dilemmas require interpretations, social and psychological.

We have attempted to show that the African is faced with fundamental dilemmas in a changing situation; in order to survive

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1. See Godfrey and Monica Wilson, The Analysis of Social Change, Cambridge, 1954; Edmund Leach, The Political Systems of Highland Burma, London 1954.
  2. See A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, "Applied Anthropology", Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Sciences, Brisbane Meeting, 1930, pp.274-5.

he must strive for adjustment or adaptation. This is where the new "adjustment cults" - the "Cargo cults" as well as the "syncretic" independent churches of Africa - come to the scene. (1)

We have shown in this preliminary discourse that "social change" involves three interrelated methods or processes: the emergence of new institutions and new social groupings of an associational nature, the development of a syncretic cultural form and a process of adaptation.

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1. See full discourse on "Atike Cults" and Apostolic Churches in later chapters.

Against the background of this brief examination of the concept of change, we shall discuss the following categories of institutions as relevant to the modern Anlo scene:

- (i) Traditional cults today.
- (ii) New Atike cults in response to new psycho-social needs.
- (iii) Orthodox Christianity in its local context.
- (iv) The Independent Church Movement.

In this chapter, we shall concern ourselves primarily with the first of these categories: traditional cults today. We shall examine existing cults in their new socio-political framework, with special reference to their present functions. Patterns of change in ritual will be noted.

In this connection, the following religious concepts will be reviewed:

- (i) Concept of Mawu.
- (ii) Concept of Trowo.
- (iii) Concept of Togbenoliwo.
- (iv) Concept of Ama or Dzosasa.

(1)

#### Concept of Mawu.

At the apex of the "animistic-animatistic" concept, we noted belief in a Supreme Being or a High God who has no cult but indirectly pervades the universe, the natural and the supernatural world, exerting generally acceptable philosophical influence of ethical order.

In the modern world, the concept of Mawu remains functionally nebulous. However, instead of expected obsolescence, it thrives side by side with Christian teachings, for the Christians have/



have borrowed this term to serve as the equivalent of Jehovah. This is one instance in which missionaries have consciously attempted to exploit existing indigenous religious concepts for the benefit of the new. In a nationally conscious Ghana where the glamour of a European name is gradually wearing off among the sophisticated, it is becoming fashionable among Christians to adopt vernacular names with Mawu for prefix or suffix at baptisms and confirmations. (1)

This liaison between the indigenous High God and the Christian Jahweh finds correspondence in other parts of West Africa. Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, Parrinder has noted that Christianity and Islam "have adopted Yoruba names for God (Olorun and Olodumare), and divine adjectives, such as Most Merciful, Almighty, into their own worship of God and Allah ... Proverbs and salutations with the divine name are retained and added to. The new religions may thus enrich the old." (2)

To both Christians and "pagans" Mawu or God remains the author and the creator of life and the world. Professor Galloway, in his *The Philosophy of Religions*, gives the Christian attributes of God as immanence, transcendence, omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience (3) all of which attributes are ascribable to the Anlo traditional concept of Mawu. Among the Yorubas, it seems that such similarities in the concept of the Supreme Being have served as the focus of general comparison between Yoruba polytheism and the 'Yoruba conception of the Trinity': "The whole of the Yorubas believe/

1. For examples, see Chapter 4 (1).
2. Parrinder, Religion in an African City, London, 1953, p.10.
3. Galloway, the Philosophy of Religions, London, 1914.

believe in the Creator and Almighty God and their thoughts are daily directed to him through the lesser Deities".<sup>(1)</sup>

When the Anlo pagan of today refers to Mawu - for example, Mawu nedi nam i.e., may God help me in my enterprise - there is no doubt that he has reference to the traditional Mawu. On the other hand, when the half-hearted Christian (literate or illiterate) refers to Mawu, there is some doubt that the reference is entirely to the Christian monotheistic Jahweh or to the traditional Mawu. The following case-history illustrates the point:

A few years ago in Ghana, I boarded the steam-launch plying the Volta River between Anyanui and Ada. Midway between the two points is the bar, the meeting point of the sea and the river, usually quite boisterous. On the particular journey in question, the engine failed just at this point. Naturally, the launch seemed a little out of control as the surf beat against it and caused a forward and backward motion. As the engineer and his assistants busied themselves with the engine below, the consternation on the faces of the womenfolk on board was unmistakable. I could hear the young illiterate Christian woman next to me mutter in rapid succession, Yehowa, Mawu, Mawu-Se, over and over again, until the engineer and his party re-appeared on deck and the launch started in regular motion once more. Though in the traditional sense, Mawu and Mawu-Se are used interchangeably, Christianity has restricted itself to the former term only; the latter has more than one referent: it may refer to the High God or to a personal idol or vodu. To my mind then, the use of the three terms Yehowa (Jehovah), Mawu and Mawu-Se, suggest "syncretic" - partly Christian and/

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1. Parrinder, op.cit. p.10 (Quoted by author from Western Echo, 30th January 1950).

and partly pagan - notions, which may be quite typical of the conceptions of the unsophisticated Christian.

The more practical terms in which Mawu is being conceived among semi-literates and a few literates today, smack of similar "syncretism". Lorries and taxicabs (including a few shops and houses) are littered with inscriptions about God, in both English and Ewe: God is great; No one but God; Woe Mye Mawua? (i.e., Are you God?). (1)

In this section, we have observed that the traditional philosophical influence of Mawu has been largely preserved. But in the modern world, his influence is gradually transcending mere philosophy; even though not directly worshipped, his influence seems to be coming down to practical levels.

(2)

#### Concept of the Trowo or Nature Spirits

Though not quite so deep-seated as the belief in Mawu, tro-worship occupies a considerable portion of the religious field, especially in terms of individual and personal adjustment. We shall discuss in terms of "public", "private" and the intermediate "occupational" cults.

Before discussing the complications of modern tro-worship, we might as well summarize here, in broad outlines, the policies and attitudes of government and missions, since the traditional cults must now function within a certain defined orbit, and in juxta-position with Christian missions.

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1. Dr. Parrinder who has pursued this aspect of the subject quite intensively makes a long list of several of these religious mottoes as he observed them at Ibadan. (See Religion in an African City, Appendix VI and VII)
  2. For the purely traditional concepts on the nature and function of the trowo, refer to Chapter 4 (2).

We have noted in the Transition (Part II) that following a general policy of religious toleration, the government extended freedom of worship to the traditional cults, quite as much as it did to Christian sects and denominations. But this bid to preserve traditional religious institutions was not usually without restrictive ordinances, restricting the range of operation. Such ordinances demanded, in general terms, that cults must conform to certain standards of justice and fair-play. The proscription and the threats of proscription that followed in the wake of such ordinances have been noted.<sup>(1)</sup> Besides proscription by ordinance, enhancing the work of the church, the finger of scorn by government and missions was always there. Civilization is associated with Christianity, and in the religious field, anything short of Christianity is "primitive". In Anlo, like any other part of Ghana 'educated' and 'Christian' are almost synonymous terms often applied interchangeably. In short, the indigenous cults have no prestige in terms of modern values. It is against such a background of restrictions, the direct and indirect attacks by government and missions, that we must study the modern function of traditional cults.

(i) The Public Cults or Du trowo: these are the cults ascribed or collectively acknowledged without choice by a lineage, a ward, town or village, or a whole state. To what extent do such cults constitute living realities today, and how far do they contribute to village and state solidarity?

In spite of a present period of effervescent apocalyptic churches,/

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1. See Chapter 6 (2).

churches, the aggregate Christian population in Anlo remains a poor minority, perhaps no more than 25% of the total population of 190,053. If we add this to the absence of atheism or agnosticism, the result is a large majority of Anloawo still acknowledging and serving their traditional deities in one form or the other. The public trowo, however, have ceased to be wholly meaningful.

Some of the old public shrines and 'temples' have been destroyed; others are empty or partly empty, and not a few are in a state of complete dilapidation and neglect. Community participation in public ritual is becoming less evident. Ritual is more and more being thrust into the hands of the priest and the trohoviawo (core-group worshippers). In the old days the community contributed in "money" or in kind towards sacrificial offering. Today, however, the financial aspect of the offering is being largely borne from the coffers of the local chief who is an ex-officio priest. One might reason that since it is the people who replenish the coffers of the chief, they indirectly pay for the ritual offering. This is quite true, but the traditional system of direct contribution which signified community-participation is strongly lacking.

Keeping the temples and shrine fences in repair is also a traditional participant ritual obligation for the community. When 'temples' and shrines of public trowo are left in a state of dilapidation, as they often are today, it is no mere dereliction of duty on the part of the community; it is a sign of disinterestedness or growing apathy.

Of course, in the midst of obvious apathy, no pagan is willing to concede or acknowledge the defunct status of any public cult./

cult. Even in the midst of ruins and the absence of ritual, a public tro remains a local guardian deity. There seems to be no absolute loss of confidence in the protective power of traditional public deities. For certain members of the community, especially the youth, this may well be an internal conflict: rejection and acceptance at the same time. It is also probable that continued confidence stems partly from the sporadic rally round cults in times of emergency and excitement.

During the period of the Asian 'flu epidemic in Ghana (in the latter half of 1957), there was a wave of excitement, and in the villages, especially, communities were unusually co-operative with priests in ritual and the observance of taboos aimed at diverting the epidemic and averting its ravages. Along the littoral, however, the quality of response, even on such emergencies leaves no doubt on the mind that there is a missing link somewhere. It seems that the public cults are no longer responsive to the social needs of the community. The traditional functions for which they earned their fame in the past are no longer entirely relevant in modern times. To discuss in specific terms we shall illustrate with the functions of Nyigbla, the most famous national tro of Anlo.

Nyigbla, it must be recalled, is primarily a war tro, imported from Gbugbla for the special function of aiding the Anloawo in inter-tribal warfare, and in uniting the people around a common deity. It soon rose to the height of its fame during the latter half of the 19th century when the Anloawo were deep in inter-tribal warfare.

Spieth/



Spieth gives an admirable historical background of the cult: how the cult flourished at Gbugbla, near Accra, how the Anloawo heard reports of this tro, and how messengers were sent to Gbugbla to find out about it. The messengers returned with favourable reports: they had found Nyigbla and persuaded it to leave Gbugbla altogether and come to settle permanently in Anlo. The chiefs of Anlo met in a council and decided to introduce Nyigbla as a national cult.<sup>(1)</sup> At first, worship was concentrated along the coast of Anlo. But gradually, the cult moved eastwards to Adina and inland, to such places as Apipe.

In symbolic representation, the tro is a piece of iron in the shape of an anvil. At Apipe Nyigbla is symbolised by a piece of carved wood. The tro is believed to be lord of water, sending the Anloawo rain; it is also lord of life giving the Anloawa children and life. But the special field of Nyigbla, the field in which it exercises<sup>(2)</sup> its greatest power is in warfare. As already noted, during war, Nyigbla himself rides on horseback, before the warriors, handling a bow and arrow.

Because Nyigbla's chief priest ranks highest in the land, the Paramount Chief himself assumed the role of chief priest.<sup>(3)</sup> Thus he combines in his person both political and ecclesiastical offices, and the corresponding allegiance of the people to his office is both political and religious. During biannual rites, the chief priest wears a long loose gown and takes active part in/

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1. Spieth, Die Religion der Eweer in Sud Togo, Gottingen, 1911.
  2. For the sake of convenience, we shall employ the present tense throughout this part of the narrative.
  3. This partly offers validations for the ritual role of the chief.

in the rites. Because of the belief that Nyigbla himself often rides on horseback, coupled with the fact that the chief priest (i.e. the Paramount Chief) wears a long loose gown, no one else (before the turn of the century) was privileged at Anlogo, the capital town, to mount a horse or to wear European clothes, which might simulate the 'long loose gown'.<sup>(1)</sup> Offenders are treated as impostors impersonating Nyigbla or his chief priest. In view of the high sanctity in which the chief priest is held, members of the public are debarred from beholding his person. Whoever meets him accidentally must turn around immediately and throw himself on the ground until all is clear. Wilful disregard often receives immediate supernatural retribution.

Several species of snakes are dedicated to Nyigbla. These are called Anyagbo. The public is forbidden to kill these. Whoever contravenes this law wilfully or by accident does penance in a variety of ways. According to Spieth, he may be subject to a fine of six marks<sup>(2)</sup> in cowrie-shells, a new pot, two knives and four bottles of liquor. The dead snake is then placed in the new pot and covered with earth. The offender is then rushed to the Nyigbla grove where he is ritually cleansed with Nyigbla's water in order to wash away the sin that is now a part of his body.<sup>(3)</sup>

Now/

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1. This taboo which practically sealed off Anloga and villages to the West from the German missionaries might have been responsible for the late evangelization of Anloga and neighbouring villages. When Keta celebrated Church centenary in 1953, Anloga had not yet attained her Golden Jubilee anniversary.
2. A 'mark' was worth a shilling at this time.
3. Spieth, op.cit.

Now, we may ask, to what extent is ritual connected with Nyigbla observed today? The traditional biannual rites have become annual. Even these annuals are markedly irregular, as some of my informants confided to me. The zeal with which the cult was worshipped in earlier times has practically died out. Scarcely do worshippers at the ritual offering now claim to see Nyigbla riding on a horseback on a cloud from the sea. Community participation, by attendance at rites, subscription towards the three cow sacrificial offering, and the reparations of the Nyigbla shrine are almost entirely lacking. The cult now seems to thrive mainly in the hands of (subordinate) priest and cult servants.

The non-observance of ancient taboos is another striking index of the loss of prestige for Nyigbla in modern times. Either the sphere of influence of these taboos has been inordinately restricted or the taboos themselves are held no longer valid. European clothes have become a part of the regular habiliments of both scholars and illiterate folk at Anloga.<sup>(1)</sup> There are three to four elementary schools besides Protestant and Catholic churches, all of which accentuate Western European values, no less in habiliments. Nyigbla's protests no longer receive community-wide attention.

We have already analysed the changing role of Nyigbla's chief priest (i.e. the Paramount Chief) in the modern political system.<sup>(2)</sup> In practice, modern circumstances make it impracticable for the chief to continue to serve fully as an ex-officio priest/

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1. The taboo on European clothes is now enforced only within the precincts of the Nyigbla shrine.
  2. See Chapter 6 (1).

priest or a quasi-divine chief, though in theory, his divine powers remain intact, in much the same way that the people themselves continue to cherish belief in the powers of Nyigbla, although it is manifest that his functions have been superseded, or rendered somewhat needless.

Aside from the interference of government, and the schoolmaster abroad, the Pax Britannica has rendered needless Nyigbla's original role as champion of war and the guarantor of victory. Inter-tribal warfare has ceased ever since Britain fully asserted authority over this section of Ghana. Since Nyigbla's fame rested on the war complex, the consequence of a decline in warfare is easily reckoned in terms of loss of prestige. After the riots of January 1953, the Nyigbla grove was destroyed on orders of the government and a modern police station built at the site. That the destruction of the grove did not provoke a major opposition from the people, is further indication of the loss of prestige for Nyigbla in modern times.

Among my informants, opinion varied as to the present status of Nyigbla. There were those who accepted my present analysis in terms of declining status and role, but pointed to corresponding maladjustments or what was styled xexemegbegble: personal and family privations, economic difficulties, disease and the relatively short life-span, the jealousies and intrigues of the modern world; these have been the writings on the wall, announcing the vengeance of Nyigbla for negligence in ritual observance. Others simply refuse to acknowledge any difference in the protective powers of Nyigbla. "Nyigblae le dua de te", they claimed, implying that Nyigbla maintains his traditional role as/

as the focus of national solidarity. Nyigbla no longer performed the role of a war god, they admitted, but he had shifted emphasis from the protection of lives in war, to the protection of lives in peace. In times of epidemic, they claimed, Nyigbla gave the warning signal.

It seems to me that the latter school of thought, perhaps sophisticated as it may seem, is entirely expressive of the conservatism with which people cling to magico-religious concepts and associated practices.

In this, and the other school of thought, beliefs outlive practice and there is a make-believe that the practice is always there, or merely dormant, but never extinct. This may be expressive of some of the problems associated with religious change. Religious change occurs and is sometimes acknowledged, but as the Wilsons have pointed out, "the emphasis is on following traditional modes of behaviour. Most often the change is regarded as an unfortunate necessity. It is traditional dogmas which are true, traditional symbols which attract, traditional actions which are valuable." (1)

We have been dealing with the modern functions of public trowo. Though the discussion has centred primarily around Nyigbla it is in illustration of a pattern. The impersonality of the public cults and the non-fulfilment of traditional functions in modern times have resulted in the decline of attention and prestige for a number of traditional public trowo. This is a function of the comparative inactivity surrounding the worship of/

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1. Wilson, The Analysis of Social Change, Cambridge, 1954, pp.87-88.

of these public cults. It goes without saying that such public cults no longer entirely serve as rallying points for even pagan communities.

It is significant that in modern Anlo, there is no national festival comparable to the Addae of the Ashanti, the Homowo of the Ga, and the Asafotu of the Ada. In recent times, literates and progressive illiterates have been exploring the ground for the institution or resurrection of a national festival that will command the respectful attention of the State. The move in itself is important for its acknowledgment of the relative absence of festivals in modern times.

Thus far, we have dealt with the declining status and role of public cults. In this connection we shall examine briefly the corresponding authority of natural leaders vis-à-vis declining public cults.

In an earlier chapter, we discussed the ritual basis of the authority of the chiefs. The Paramount Chief of the whole State, the chief of a village, and the headman of a ward serve as the symbols of state, village, and ward unity respectively because of their ritual roles in respect of public cults in their several units. They perform ritual functions that edify their position; in other words, political office has some kind of religious sanction. This applies to the military as well. The political and military authority of the Awadada (field marshal) finds validation, at least in part, in his ritual obligation.

There is thus some connection between ritual obligation and/



and political authority. As ritual declines, the prestige and authority of the traditional leaders decline correspondingly. One might argue the other way round that the decline in prestige and authority of the traditional leaders is responsible for the decline in ritual and the prestige of the traditional cults. The chiefs no longer effectively perform their ritual tasks because of their new political responsibilities in modern administration. In any case, we have already demonstrated the decline in the prestige of territorial-political cults. The corresponding decline in the prestige and authority of traditional rulers in situations of contact, is very well known.

In Anlo, the political and territorial amalgamation of formerly independent States as a result of the recommendations of the Crowther Report of 1912 was de jure a loss of political sovereignty for the various headchiefs of the amalgamated units. Besides, modern traditional rulers, including the Paramount Chief, must now function under the ever-present shadow of the Government Agent, an appointee of Central Government. This aspect of the problem involving loss of prestige for the modern chief has been fully discussed by Professor Busia.<sup>(1)</sup>

In commenting on the decline of ritual and corresponding decrease in the authority and prestige of natural rulers, it will be wrong, however, to over-emphasize and thus give the impression that modern chiefs no longer perform ritual obligations. As a matter of fact, even literate and Christian chiefs do maintain some kind of relations with ritual, especially in rites associated with the/

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1. See Busia's The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti, London, 1951.

the ancestral spirits - to be discussed later. What is relevant to the present purpose is the undermining of belief in the link between ritual tasks and political authority. The chief no longer sees his authority as deriving from the meticulous performance of ritual obligations. This is what contributes to the undermining of the traditional solidarity of the ward, the village, the ethnic group or national unit as unity. Of course, this is a complex subject which cannot be divorced from the work of Christian missions and the new socio-economic situation. With social and economic differentiation, religion often becomes a banner for sectionalism; society is split, not welded together by religious development.<sup>(1)</sup>

(ii) The 'Occupational' Trowo: These, we have explained, are quasi-public cults dominated by particular economic interests. In a fishing community, a cult designed to protect the interests of fishermen may be acknowledged as a ward or village cult if the large majority of members are fishermen. In this regard, an essentially 'occupational' cult assumes the character of a public cult.

Unlike the public territorial and political cults, 'occupational' cults seem to enjoy relative popularity in modern communities, partly on account of the economic appeal they hold out to followers, and partly on account of the pressure to conform. In the ritual associated with fishing and farming, there seems to be active community participation.

At Keta-Dzelukofe, even as recently as 1957, when the fishing/

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1. Raymond Firth, Religion and Personal Adjustment, Henry Myers Lecture, London, 1943.

fishing season fell below expectations, there was gossip about nyidedeto or an appeal to Awleketi.<sup>(1)</sup> The secrecy surrounding the ritual makes it difficult to ascertain how often this appeal is made; but gossip was usually not without some foundation.

Modern maritime fishing, as earlier observed, has undergone some technical and sociological changes; the organization into companies, the purchase of expensive imported nets (seines) in lieu of locally manufactured ones, the considerable capital outlay leading to the formation of larger companies,<sup>(2)</sup> the change in the relative position of women in the traditional social structure. These technical and sociological changes are contained within the traditional ritual framework of belief in supernatural powers guiding or channelling the fishing industry. Thus common beliefs and common ritual continue substantially to weld members of various fishing companies into one homogeneous 'guild' functioning under the chief fisherman, who in certain circumstances may also represent the local political and territorial chief of the community.

At Dzelukofe, Wednesday is sacred to Awleketi, and accordingly fishing is taboo. It is an open secret that Christians also subscribe to this taboo. But as is generally to be expected, the juxtaposition of Christians and pagans in the community introduces cracks and crevices in the united front.

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1. See Chapter 5 (5).
  2. See R.M. Lawson, The Structure, Migration and Resettlement of Ewe Fishing Units, African Studies Vol.17, No.1, 1958, pp.21-27.

In recent Bakpotoe (tro) rites at Woe - a fishing community along the seaboard - Christian fishermen were obliged to subscribe to the expenses of a fishing ritual - probably, as they always have done. The local Presbyterian Pastor had news of the ritual and vehemently protested against levying such impositions on Christians. The simple explanation of the local pagan fishermen was that Christians, like the rest of the community, benefitted from the ritual since Bakpotoe did not discriminate in conferring fishing benefits.

In the farming communities inland, there are evidences of stronger attachment to 'occupational' cults. Taboos are rigorously observed. The Aka and Gadze ritual at Penyi is a case in point. During the pre-farming and harvest-home ritual when noise in any form is taboo, it is believed that even church bells cease to peal and school children fail to march to the tune of drums and pipes. The cult claims the undivided allegiance of the community as one body.

From the foregoing, we see at a glance a certain variation in the effects of acculturation when we compare Woe along the littoral - just eight miles away from Keta, the metropolis of the State - with Penyi, a typical inland farming community. "Social change" at this stage does not easily lend itself to broad generalizations affecting the entire state. There are some variations from coast to interior, from urban to rural districts, and from town to village.

In this section, we have demonstrated in respect of the 'occupational' cults, considerable community attachment to ritual where there is in the minds of the people, a clear case of economic need/

need satisfaction, in a specific sense. There is, according to our present data, a direct correlation between specific need-satisfaction and the survival of ritual in modern times.<sup>(1)</sup> We shall discover further validations in the category of 'private' trowo which centre around specific problems of the life cycle.

(iii) "Private" Trowo: These include all trowo which serve neither "public" nor 'occupational' ends. They function primarily in the personal interest of cult members. The voluntary membership characteristic of them, shows some of the features of modern clubs and associations. Unlike the impersonal 'public' cult catering for general community welfare, fertility and prosperity, "private" cults look into more personal and individual problems.

In spite of the militating influence of the government and missions, there is no evidence to suggest that collectively, private cults have become less useful. Their traditional functions in providing psycho-social adjustment for the group and the individual have not been entirely superseded by government services and Christian institutions. The problems of the life cycle for which the cults are particularly fitted are not easily affected by modern social changes. This is an important factor which makes for the success of the "private" cults where "public" cults seem to fail.

One other modern advantage of the "private" cults over the "public" ones is the relative malleability of the former. They seem better suited to absorbing the shaping power of surrounding/

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1. Compare Nadel, Nupe Religion, London, 1954, Chapter 3.

surrounding influences than the "public" ones. The ritual specialists of the "private" cults are generally relatively young, a little less conservative and more disposed to understand the new demands of the community and to offer corresponding ritual modification and adjustment than the public cult ritual specialists. The implication is that the survival of traditional cults is a function of adjustment in terms of modern social values. Correspondingly, adjustment in terms of modern social values implies ritual modifications. To avoid dealing in generalities - sometimes unavoidable in grappling with a large field - we shall discuss in reference to specific cults. We begin with the most famous single 'private' cult in Anlo, Yewe.

It will be rewarding first to assess the status of Yewe in the community today. In the traditional background, we noted Yewe as a dynamic, conservative, illiterate secret cult. By virtue of its influence, it had arrogated to itself some of the judicial and political functions of the chief.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the contemporary scene, Yewe no longer entirely commands prestige in the traditional sense. Alagadzedze, except in the villages, is no longer seen by the community as an effective institution of domination and self-assertion. We have earlier referred (in footnote) to the 'decree' of the Dzodze Local Council which forbade alagadzedze (possession) without prior consent of the Council. The implication is that when a member of the cult feels 'insulted' by a 'Gentile', alagadzedze must first be negotiated with the Council. This, we explained, took the wind out of/

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1. For details of Yewe structure and function, see Chapter 4 (4).



of the sail of alagadzedze.

It goes without saying that Yewe has no free reins in a developing town or progressive village. Cult influence seems to be relatively militant in the villages with fewer modern social amenities, and, therefore, less directly under the aegis of the Government or local council. It is extremely rare to find an alaga (possessed cult member) in the heart of Keta, although the Yewe stronghold at Dzelukofe is only two to three miles away. This is in keeping with the declining influence of Yewe in correspondence with the growth of a village or community.

In the judicial sphere, however, Yewe has completely lost ground. Since the passing away of the late Amenor Husor, the predecessor of the present Hubono (Chief Priest), the Paramount Chief has withheld from his successor the 'investiture' or official mandate to adjudicate in matters affecting members of the cult and the 'Gentile' public. To this extent, Yewe has lost prestige, but less overtly than might be supposed.

In practical terms these restrictions bear very little on the attractions that the cult still holds for the pagan community. The traditional incentives of membership or participation in a closely-knit organization, the many opportunities for self-exhibition in the Yewe regalia, during the dances and ceremonials which have maintained traditional interests, largely remain, in spite of a certain loss of prestige. In terms of cult branches, it seems that Yewe's aggregate influence has been spreading wider than before. According to the chief priest at/  
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at Dzelukofe, in recent times, new branches have been opening across the Volta (in Ada territory) and among their northern Ewe neighbours. It seems, then, that Yewe's appeal to the community has been unremitting, in spite of a certain loss of traditional prestige. It is my opinion that this loss of prestige, but unremitting appeal, is to be traced to the malleability of the cult in present modern circumstances.

Yewe was first schooled in self-restraint after the 1915 entanglement with Central Government in which the latter sought to proscribe the cult. Yewe won her case; but some years later, by its own initiative, Yewe took the first step to introduce literacy into the cult when a vernacular pamphlet was printed setting forth the prohibitions of the cult, and offering a very general idea of Yewe for the benefit of non-members. In theory, a prospective member is expected to study the rules and regulations of the cult and the general obligations of membership before formal application. On becoming a fully-fledged member, he keeps the rules and regulations for a guide. In practice, this is not entirely feasible since the large majority of members remain illiterate. But the whole idea of reducing to writing facts about the secret cult, without prompting from an external source, is a bold departure from traditional ritual practice. According to the chief priest at Dzelukofe, the door has been opened for Christians and "clerks".

Evolution or devolution, whichever term one cares to apply to this process, is certainly an effort to adjust the cult to/  
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to a changing community. In an interview, I listened to the High Priest enumerate with pride the achievements of the cult within the past few years. Among other things, he cited the following civic duties:

(i) Yewe's role on the occasion of the official visit to the Anlo State of a Colonial Governor in the early thirties: Yewe greatly enhanced the success of the day, not only by escorting the Governor for miles to Keta, but also performing dance exhibitions in the public interest. This was the first time, the High Priest emphasized, that Yewe had had to perform purely in the interest of ahewo ("Gentiles").

(ii) Yewe's role during the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II: On this occasion, Yewe took part in the general rejoicing by organizing drumming and dancing for the general public. Here again, performance was purely in the interest of ahewo.

(iii) Yewe's role during the Ghana Independence celebrations: During the celebrations, the cult members performed both on a regional level at Dzelukofe and on a national plane at Accra. At Accra it was the first time in the history of the cult when it had had to perform away from the background of a traditional Yewe compound,<sup>(1)</sup> there being no cult branches at Accra. Before the/

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1. Yewe dance exhibitions are normally performed outside the compound, but no more than ten to twenty yards away. In the course of dancing, there is continual retreat from dance arena to compound for various ritual purposes. All dancers are presumed possessed at dancing and the need for frequent retreat to the compound where the ritual objects are stored, is evident.

the event, this constituted a major stumbling block, involving as it did, a major departure from ritual practice. There were also fears about such possibilities as tape-recording Yewe songs and later commercializing these by mass gramophone records. It might be most embarrassing for cult followers if Yewe songs were rendered on gramophones at street corners, since particular songs evoked corresponding responses from members.<sup>(1)</sup> That these difficulties, though quite perplexing, were surmounted, implied modifications in ritual practice, and evidence of a new Yewe cult responding to the changes of the time.<sup>(2)</sup>

In view of these achievements of which the High Priest was overtly proud, it was not surprising that he proceeded to ascribe to Yewe the functions of the people's "church", working for thenation's dedekpokpo (salvation).<sup>(3)</sup> Today, Yewe is willing/

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1. When a member turns 'wild' as a result of the 'unsult' of an ahe ('Gentile'), information is first relayed to the compound by means of a particular song from the possessed. It is this song which mobilises the rest of the cult in sympathy possession even before members come by the specific grievance of the possessed.
  2. After the performance at Accra, Yewe cult members returned to Dzelukofe fully jubilant that they had topped the list of tribal groups with whom they had competed.
  3. The two related words, 'church' and 'salvation' used by informant are significant. Both words have Christian overtones. Durkheim employs the term 'church' in a generalized sense to imply religion or cult. Among pagans and Christians in Anlo, the term 'church', or the native equivalent soleme usually has reference to a Christian sect or demomination. It is in this sense that the word has special significance - an effort to draw parallels between Yewe and the Christian 'church'. It was from this motive that Yewe was reported at one time to have sought a subsidy from the government on a parity with the mission churches, not realising, of course, that grants were made, not to churches as such, but to the schools attached to them.

willing to perform exhibitions overseas (when there is a sponsor), not because it has a specific axe to grind, but for the good of the nation - serving as Ghana's cultural ambassador abroad. Undoubtedly, these are significant departures, in form and content, from the supremely traditional, illiterate, conservative secret cult known at the turn of the century.

It seems to me that drawing parallels with Christianity is part of the adaptive mechanism of indigenous 'private' cults in modern times. We have cited Yewe's claim to the status of a 'church'. There is claim to similar status among afa bokowo (afa diviners). In this connection, my interview with a celebrated semi-literate boko at Dzelukofe is illuminating. According to this boko, it was wrong to conceive a fundamental difference or conflict between afa and Christianity. Those who thought otherwise did not understand the ends of divination and the purpose of Christianity. The boko and the minister of religion reveal and propagate the will of God or the promises of God to man. To realise success and happiness in life, a man has to live according to the will or the testament of God. Prior to the advent of Christianity, God revealed this will through natural phenomena and by the offices of the boko. Christianity which is substantially directed to this end has obviously come to supplement, never to negate, the role of the boko. Both achieve identical ends, though by different means. (1)

Later/

1. I paid my first visit to this boko while he was in the thick of a funeral for his eldest son. "How did he die?", I enquired in sympathy. He explained at length how his son had developed interest in lorry-driving, and how he had advised against it because it was revealed to him that masonry was more suited to his temperament and physique. Masonry was God's choice for him. His son persisted in driving, and naturally, he was struck down with a sickness that proved fatal. God had exacted his vengeance, he concluded in calm philosophic resignation.

Later corroborations from other bokowo with some inkling of Christianity have convinced me that this account was not just the personal philosophy of an extremely shrewd mind. Most bokowo, like other ritual specialists, lay claim to Christian and literate consultants or followers. It is not improbable that the idea of pagan cults and Christian churches achieving identical ends has been nursed from the rationalizations of Christians and literates who attempt to find rapport in, justification for participation in Christian and pagan institutions at the same time. This is an adaptive mechanism, and as far as the 'private' cults are concerned, we may well speak of a 'syncretic' movement.

In this section on the trowo, we have demonstrated a correlation between specific need-satisfaction and participation in ritual. In other words, a traditional cult functions actively only to the extent that it satisfies specific needs in the modern sense. Because the more general traditional functions of 'public' territorial and political cults tend to be appropriated by modern institutions, or become less effectual in modern times, participation or interest is gradually declining. On the other hand, both 'professional' and 'private' cults tend to thrive because they continue to satisfy specific economic,<sup>(1)</sup> social and psychological/

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1. The modern boko, for example, is a petty financier. He has economic returns from his relations with consultant-clients as well as his bokoviwo (disciples or afa children, i.e. those who have served apprenticeship under him to qualify as bokoviwo). In the annual reunion with his bokoviwo, each bokovi makes a fitting present to his former master.



psychological needs. But survival means adjustment in terms of modern values. To this end, there is a growing tendency on the part of 'private' cults to identify themselves with modern institutions with prestige values. This entails modifications of ritual.

(3)

Concept of Togbenoliwo or Lineal Ancestors

Thus far, we have discussed two of our four major concepts. We shall now examine the modern aspects of ancestral worship as our third concept. This concerns the lineage.

The lineal ancestors, from their abode in the underworld, we have noted, do influence the life of their surviving kin. They are the owners of the land, protectors, the source of good and found of fertility for those who please them, but instruments of punishment for those who do not; they are always in need of attention from the living and are never forgotten.<sup>(1)</sup> By the ancestral offering, the link between the living and the dead is given expression.

What is relevant to the present purpose is an assessment of the extent to which ancestral ritual is observed, the form it has assumed in modern circumstances and the functions served by such ritual.

In this connection, one has but to observe the extreme pre-occupation with burial ritual and the frequency of the household libation to be satisfied that modern education and Christianity have not displaced or severed the link between the ancestors and their living descendants. The living still survive in the shadow/

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1. B. Ward, Ewe social organisation (M.A., (London) Thesis), 1949, p.

shadow of the ancestors, because in the minds of the living the traditional functions of the ancestors remain valid for modern circumstances. But as with other forms of traditional ritual functioning in the modern framework, modern social changes impose certain modifications or adjustments. We shall discuss the whole subject under two headings:

- (i) Burial and mourning rites;
- (ii) Ancestral rites and lineage solidarity.

(i) Burial and mourning rites constitute the first stages of ancestral spirithood, and as observed in the traditional background considerable importance was attached to them.

Today, coffin burial has entirely displaced mats and shroud; burial may no longer take place in the home. It is a punishable offence to 'carry the corpse' in order to trace suspects. Aside from these restrictions, traditional ritual in respect of the dead is freely observed.

As part of the modern social changes, monetary gifts to the deceased in the form of coins have displaced cowries. Similarly, the Bible, hymn book, baptismal and confirmation certificates as well as favourite novels tend to form a part of the coffin enclosure for deceased Christians and literates.<sup>(1)</sup> Here, the traditional notions of a deceased in need of money and favourite items to secure his comforts in the next world are given adequate expression, but within the modern context of Christianity/

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1. Section 45 clause 4 of the E.P. Church Bye-Laws specifically forbids such practices for Christians, but so strong is belief in the traditional concepts that for many a Christian the law is practically a dead letter.

Christianity and literacy.

Among pagans, mourning rites largely follow the traditional pattern as already described: a short period of house confinement for the widow, followed by a brief ceremonial of widowhood at the beach (or by a body of water); then the sixteen-month long period of mourning and the final cleansing rites at the beach. Christians following the ritual tend to abridge the mourning period. The initiation into mourning and the final cleansing rites are performed in the chapel in lieu of the beach, supervised by presbyters and the local church pastor, in lieu of elderly widows and ritual specialists. Here again, the form of a purely traditional ritual has been maintained but clothed differently. (This aspect of the subject will be re-examined).

In this summary sketch of burial and mourning ritual in modern circumstances we see that a few external changes have been imposed by certain categories of persons; but the nuclear traditional belief in the link between the dead and the living, the basis of ancestral worship, has been largely preserved among both pagans and Christians.

(ii) Ancestral rites and lineage solidarity: As may be deduced from the attachment to burial and mourning ritual, belief in lineal ancestors remains quite firm in modern times. Christian and literate chiefs maintain ritual connections with their ancestors by periodic libations and sacrificial offering to their stool, the symbol of ancestral presence. Personal inclinations/

inclinations to the contrary, if any, are usually waived in the interest of custom and the lineage. Most public meetings begin (and sometimes end) with invocations including the pouring of libations - and invitation to the ancestors or acknowledgment of their presence. In most families, a run of misfortunes may still be traced to ancestral displeasure, and the anxiety to propitiate is always evident. Similarly, some of the happiest family reunions in the birth of a child, marriage, or some piece of good fortune are never complete without libations to the lineal ancestors. Joy or sorrow, the ancestors are there!

But what is of immediate importance for present considerations is the strength of the ancestral cult group as a functioning unit in modern times. Since the ancestral cult group is largely identifiable with the lineage, we must examine present-day lineage solidarity as a function of cult group unity and vitality.

Examples abound in contemporary African communities in which ancestor worship has weakened as a result of the weakening of lineage and family organizations. In other words, there seems to be a direct correlation between a disintegrating kinship structure and a decaying ancestral cult. Following this argument, we shall examine in outline the strength of the existing Anlo lineage bonds.

In our transition period which dealt with the nature of contact, we examined in outline, some of the effects of the introduction of European economy, and particularly money as a medium of exchange. In the Anlo District where contact has introduced no new industries, no mines or mineral deposits, and no/

no economic products comparable to cocoa, the emphasis has been largely on trade and wage labour, both of which accentuate periodic and quasi-permanent exodus from the family roof. The numerous Anlo "colonies" in Ashanti, northern Eweiland, Koforidua, Accra, Sekondi-Takoradi and elsewhere prove positively the migrant tendencies of the modern Anlo. Such periodic exodus do serve sometimes as the harbinger of lineage dislocations,<sup>(1)</sup> particularly among the literate members of the lineage.

First, it leads to the establishment of two homes. As attachment to the second - i.e. one away from the lineage - grows strong, so do ties with the first weaken. Of course, the illiterate wage-labourer rarely completely severs connections with his lineage home. He always strives to come back. On the other hand, the literate member of the lineage who has taken on a permanent job away from home, gradually ceases to be physically and functionally a part of the lineage at home. The residual link is perhaps the periodic remittance to ageing mother or father. On retirement, the tendency is to go home, but rarely to the old homestead or compound. He moves into a rented apartment or to his own comfortable bungalow built in the course of employment.

This is in circumstances where there is evident financial self-sufficiency. Where the literate is not entirely financially secure, he continues to have some stake in the family property. He may want a piece of the family landed property for/

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1. Compare Fortes, "Culture Contact as a Dynamic Process", Africa, Vol.9, p.40.

for agricultural purposes, on retirement, or to build his own house. Such circumstances will naturally pre-dispose him to more or less tenuous associations or identification with the lineage. This, in outline, is the extent to which money serves as the link between a literate and his family, or the factor of asserting one's independence of the lineage.

Among the illiterates in the villages (where there are fewer social services) money economy or wage labour has not quite radically altered the traditional family patterns. I gained this impression, especially in the villages beyond the lagoon, and in the rural communities inland where social services are almost nil. Villages are largely in the compound fashion, each compound with its headman, and most members of a zone or ward claiming common agnatic descent. In some of the smaller villages, all are related one to the other. In communities of this sort, family ties are relatively strong, the lineage or family head has considerable say in individual affairs. But it is unrealistic to deny the relative freedom of the youth engaged in various economic pursuits away from home. Money in their pockets means less subservience to lineage authority and relative freedom of action in such fields as marriage.

This kind of organization is in sharp contrast to the relatively heterogenous community such as Keta. This is the administrative headquarters of the district, the seat of the Government Agent. It is the headquarters of the three main missionary churches. Linked with Dzelukofe, two to three miles away, Keta has no fewer than six fully approved and efficiently run/



run elementary schools, and two government assisted secondary schools. The only fully-fledged State hospital is located here: there are male and female, maternity and infant wards, as well as an isolation block for the treatment of infectious diseases. The district power-house, the appellate court with jurisdiction over appeals from local council tribunals, a magistrate court, are all situated here. A few commercial houses, a port with facilities, especially for the import of large quantities of cement and corrugated iron sheets, a busy local market in the heart of the town, help to give Keta an air of real commercial activity. The few Europeans resident here are mostly commercial agents, senior administrative officers and Roman Catholic ministers of religion.

Now, how does this sketchy survey reflect the existing social structure? According to the census of population in 1948, the average number of residents per house at Keta was 11.9 (and 2.6 per room) which is quite small in comparison with the population of a traditional compound where residents may number upwards of twenty-five. The implication is that the size of the compound at Keta has been growing smaller. The trend seems to be towards the single roof homestead (with a separate block for a kitchen) where the father of the simple or compound family has direct control. He is not directly responsible to any absentee senior brother, nor does he appear to have any visible link with other homesteads for ritual purposes. There is less emphasis on kinship and its obligations, although nephews and nieces may be 'looked after' or accepted for domestic training or schooling./

Marriages seem to follow adapted European patterns more closely than the indigenous practice. Clan endogamy and lineage exogamy no longer seriously apply. What seems most important is that closely related members of the lineage shall not intermarry. Incest and the sororate are still frowned upon by all classes of people; aside from the ridicule involved, they are held to have supernatural sanctions. Similarly, social approbrium attaches to sister-exchange. In the disposal of property, son-inheritance is the rule.

The effect of these deviations from traditional norms is that the lineage, as a cohesive unit, is moving gradually from the central core to the circumference of the social organization. Corporate responsibility of the lineage is now being exchanged for responsibility of the homestead.

Apparently, there are intermediate communities between Keta and the less developed villages in the rural areas; from personal observations, these more closely approximate the latter than the former.

If kinship ties must reflect the institution of ancestral worship, we have the large majority of towns and villages continuing to cherish belief in the lineal ancestors and substantiating belief in both ancestral and stool worship.

In the undeveloped villages (undeveloped, in the sense of lacking modern social amenities or services), we would expect strong attachment to the ancestral and the stool cult. Where circumstances such as migrant wage labour preclude members from attendance or participation in major ancestral ritual, they will make remittances home in the interest of the occasion.

In circumstances where members of a lineage refuse fully/

fully to acknowledge the secular authority of a lineage head, because of their wealth or other forms of newly acquired prestige, they are less likely to boycott him (lineage-head) in religious matters. For example, in yofewowo where several of the family dead in a decade or two are committed to the ancestors in a massive ritual, most members of the family will rally round the lineage-head with contributions in money or in kind. Similarly, dzawuwu or zitsilele (stool-feeding or cleansing) which takes place once in several years compels full lineage allegiance.

In reference to the Keta-type community embracing Christians and literates, there is an expected variation in attitudes to ancestral worship. There are those with favourable attitude to the ancestors and ancestral worship but less emphasis on kinship or lineage alignment. There are others who uphold ancestral worship just because it is 'custom', something that has to be done irrespective of efficacy or results. Others are not to be bothered by pagan institutions. These varieties in attitude were amply reflected in a stool ritual witnessed at Wuti, a village along the coast, some fifteen miles away from Keta. For the purpose of illustration, we shall sketch the ritual briefly.

The day was 'boxing day' 1957, a Thursday; the event, the washing and feeding of the stool of Chief Nyaho Tamakloe III, senior divisional chief who had been installed a few weeks earlier. Participants and observers included a large throng of the Tamakloe family, ancillary families, as well as representative bodies from the Lasibi wing of the Anlo State of which/

which Chief Tamakloe is Asafohenega. The chief himself is a well-educated Christian, past middle age. There were almost as many Christians and literates as pagans. Obviously, the throng was a mixed one.

A large roomy shed, made of coconut palm branches had been erected contiguous to the 'stool house'. Here the reception of the washed stools,<sup>(1)</sup> the exchange of greetings, the drumming and dancing, the merrymaking and conviviality were to feature as the climax of the event.

In the early morning of the day in question, the stool had been washed at the beach by representatives of the Mlade and Lawe clans.<sup>(2)</sup> They were first wrapped in pieces of calico and then the zivo (stool cloth, usually a few yards of fine velvet or an artistically woven Kente cloth).

Earlier, by divination, the stools had designated their own porters. It is the journey from the beach to the shed that is of particular significance in bringing to relief the different attitudes and beliefs of participants and observers.

Amid the firing of muskets, Hlikpee (shrill cries of women), the stool-bearers began the journey home. Each stool was flanked by a body of custodians. As a bearer suddenly darted forward and scampered away, he was chased by the custodians and a section of the crowd with the shrill cries of women ringing behind./

1. There were three stools, one major, two subsidiaries. The major one represented the original stool of Chief Nyaho Tamakloe I. It is this which enshrined the lineal ancestral spirit.
2. These two clans traditionally perform the leading role in all kinds of ritual relating to chiefs - installation, burial, stool washing.

behind. Soon he was brought back to position in the procession. At other times a bearer virtually came to a halt and would not budge until copious libations had flooded his path. The possessed delirious bearers were presumed to be acting on the instructions of the ancestors on their shoulders. Because of these diversions, considerable time was spent in reaching the destination just over a mile away.

At the destination (i.e. the shed by the stool house), the two minor stools were without difficulty, lifted off their bearers' shoulders and set on special dais. The third stool, the major one, was not so easily to be settled. Libations and petitions had apparently failed to calm down the bearer. The bearer, thoroughly exhausted, continued the backward and forward motions, sometimes throwing himself and the stool into the arms of seated guests, only to rise and scamper away with the custodians after him. There was no mistaking the anxiety on the faces of several Christians I could recognise, who seemed clearly apprehensive of some danger. If the stool accidentally touched the ground, the event would be attended with specific disaster for the lineage. In the same group, other Christians expressed silent indignation against the bearer and wished the stool to be forcibly carried off his head. Of course, the latter Christians would attribute possession and the peculiar motions to the premeditated tricks of the bearer.

Both sets of feelings express the mixed sentiments that are brought to bear in a ceremonial of this sort among members of/  
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of the Keta type community. There are the genuine believers in the sanctity of the traditional ancestral cult; there are others whose interest is mainly in the lineage reunion that the occasion presents, as well as participation in a custom which to them has no deep religious significance. There are also the scoffers and the iconoclasts who might join the Ghana Christian Council in a forthright condemnation of libations and the totality of ancestral worship.<sup>(1)</sup>

Besides the appeal of custom, one factor which will probably commend the ancestral cult in the future, when the indigenous structure has been further weakened by social change, is the innate flexibility of the cult as it obtains in Anlo. We have already noted that it does not function on a national plane as among the Ashanti<sup>(2)</sup> nor is ritual exclusively lineal in character.

The lineage head performs the role of tsino (ritual official) at all major ancestral offerings in the ancestral compound./

1. During the Ghana Independence celebrations, a civic reception for the Duchess of Kent by the Accra Municipal Council to which the clergy and the laity had been invited, was to feature libation by a Ga ritual specialist. The Ghana Christian Council of Churches vehemently objected to the libation aspect of the programme on the grounds that it was pagan, and therefore an affront to the Christian guests. They petitioned the Accra Municipal Council to scrap the libation. The request was ignored and the Christian Council officially boycotted the programme. Thereafter, there was a paper battle between the clergy and the 'culturologists' in which each sought to condemn or defend libation. To the proponents, libation is an African custom which gives African touches even to a European event.
2. Busia, "Ancestor Worship, Libation, Stool Festival", Christianity and African Culture, Accra, 1955, p.22.



compound. But this does not preclude individuals from making their own personal and private offerings. Indeed, the more frequent forms of libation in the nature of maize flour and water or a glass of drink are of the latter type. An individual who has met with a piece of good fortune exclaims, Togbega gadi nam (another good luck from great grandfather) and proceeds to pour a libation of water and maize flour at the entrance of his house in acknowledgment. Such individual offerings may persist far beyond a disrupted lineage.

In this section, we have examined the inter-connection of the ancestral cult and the lineage. Relatively few economic and social changes have affected the indigenous social structure which makes possible the reality of the ancestral cult in modern circumstances.

(4)

Dzosasa and Ama, the field of Charms and Medicine.

Dzosasa and Ama, we have earlier explained, encompass the whole field of the Anlo pharmacopoeia, including the use of charms for protective and destructive ends.

It is well known in "social change" that increasing pre-occupation with "magic" (i.e. antidotal and destructive medicine) in the urban area is related to increase in social scale.<sup>(1)</sup> The line of reasoning seems to be that medicine being/

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1. See Audry Richard, Economic Development and Tribal Change, Cambridge, 1954.

being relatively mobile and individualistic in character, is more susceptible of transportation from the village to towns and industrial centres than any other religious concept. The result is that all kinds of medicine, indicative of a heterogenous population, abound in the town, and clerical employees and illiterate labourers are known practitioners.

At Accra, in a conference of the clergy and the laity which essayed to examine the relationship of Christianity to African culture, Rev. Asamoah quoted Mr. Gardiner (now the Establishment Secretary in Ghana) as follows: "Many African women of high education, when they are in the family way, generally prefer to go home to their mothers or grandmothers to deliver instead of delivering at the hospital". Rev. Asamoah commented as follows: "If we investigate the cause we would probably find that the idea behind this step is the fear that however skilful a doctor might be, he is not competent to deal with the forces of the spiritual world which may affect the birth of a child. But at home the old women should know how to deal with these forces. Pregnant women, even if they are Christian, not infrequently carry amulets on themselves to protect themselves against the influence of evil spirits." (1)

This is perhaps a neat summary of the position of indigenous medicine in modern Ghana. 'High education' and membership of Christianity are no effective bars to the practice of/

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1. Asomoah, "The Influence of Fetishism", Christianity and African Culture, p.42.

of indigenous medicine. The situation is substantially the same in other parts of Africa under the European impact. Dr. Parrinder thus summarizes the position:

"When men go to live in the modern towns, mines and ports of Africa they still use many magical charms. Indeed, while the ancient gods may decline, the practice of magic seems to remain as strong as ever. In the bewildering conditions of the towns men need spiritual powers to support them. These are partly provided by the new religions, but also backed up by new charms. New situations demand new medicines. These are provided both by the old medicinemen, who flourish in the towns, and also by new medicines, the quackery of Europe and India. Many European and Asian charlatans do a great export trade of magical objects to Africa."(1)

In the light of this knowledge, we shall examine the specific case of the practice of indigenous medicine in Anlo against the modern background of education or literacy, Christianity, administrative pressures and modern medicines.

We have already taken note of the lack of industrial centres capable of attracting large populations. There is, however, considerable geographical mobility away from the State for wage labour and clerical employment. It will require additional and more specific investigation to determine what influence is exerted by migrant labourers and clerical employees on the Anlo pharmacopoeia. For present purposes, we shall restrict/

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1. Parrinder, African Traditional Religion, London, 1954, pp.115-116.

restrict our field to internal influences.

(i) Government and Local Authority Influences: European disbelief in the efficacy of the indigenous medicine, especially the antidotal, non-therapeutic medicine has made illegal a wide field of practice. Recourse to aka-divination or 'magic of appeal' - to use Godfrey Wilson's phraseology - in cases in which lack of evidence made a legal decision impossible, has been banned in the local council courts. Following traditional practice of public indignation against the practice of bad medicine (i.e. "sorcery" or "destructive magic") including witchcraft, the Government has made it a punishable offence to "put any person into fetish".<sup>(1)</sup>

While the government has not entirely discouraged therapeutic medicine, it seeks to bring practitioners under control. Chap.57, sections 15-17 of the "Laws of the Gold Coast 1936", lays down certain conditions that a ritual specialist must fulfil in order to qualify as a licensed herbalist. He must demonstrate expert practical knowledge of herbs and must be held personally accountable for the patients under his charge.

In recognising only the therapeutic skill of a "herbalist", the government seeks to divorce the medicinal therapeutic skill from the non-therapeutic "magical" claims, both of which, according to traditional notions, are inseparable. In other/

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1. See "Native Administration (Colony) Ordinance sub-section 52, paragraph 12.

other words the government seeks to introduce a new concept into indigenous medical practice: 'profane herbalism'. The impact of this concept is discussed below.

(ii) Christian and Educational Influences: Unlike Islam which has partly adopted traditional medical practice<sup>(1)</sup> or invented collateral protective charms through the use of the Qu'ran, Christianity wholly disapproves of the indigenous medical practice, especially when curative medicine is held inseparable from mysticism or ritual. In other words, medical treatment involving inhalations, potions, powders, fumigations, poultices, lotions, salve or ointment, semi-surgical operations at the hands of a pagan is as reprehensible as the antidotal, non-therapeutic medicine or "magical charm".

It is quite possible that orthodox Christian intransigence may have caused some of these medicines to fall into disuse, if not completely disappear, in the predominantly Christian environment. In the Keta Urban Council area, the average of licentiate herbalists per annum is no more than 25. In the other local council areas where Christianity is far less militant, one would expect a considerably higher average. But as later events will reveal, this is not an entirely satisfactory index of measuring the strength of indigenous medical practice.

Education also has the overt tendency to acknowledge only/

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1. Vide Craft of the barber-doctors in Nadel's Nupe Religion, London, 1954, p.160; The Mori-Man among the Mende: Little, "The Mende in Sierra Leone", African Worlds, London, 1954, p.136.

only modern medicine. The really educated or sophisticated men will naturally have a better understanding of the causes of diseases. He will be equipped to distinguish between purely therapeutic herbalism and non-therapeutic charms and amulets. Besides, the educated man is also a Christian and, at least overtly, is unwilling to tarnish his prestige by identification with pagan illiterate medicinemen. Following this thesis, we may conclude that literacy or education tends to discredit indigenous medicine.

In practice, however, case-histories do not fit into such neat theoretical compartments. On the one hand, Christians and educated people have increased the categories of indigenous medical practice, and on the other, various motives impel the Christian or educated man to seek after the indigenous atiketo (medicineman).

Pagan medicinemen converted into Christianity may re-establish practice as profane herbalists. When they do so, they loudly declaim their 'new status' as herbalists solely interested in the pharmaceutical properties of herbs. At Anloga, one such convert, a celebrated one, became almost an evangelist, drawing on to his Protestant Church a few pagans who continued to seek medical treatment at his hands. Without impugning the practice of this elderly Christian who from personal experience must be held to be generally above board, we may in general terms question the genuineness of a true and complete separation of the therapeutic from the non-therapeutic in/



in Christian indigenous medical practice. At any rate, the claim introduces a new category of practitioners who have no recourse to mysticism.

A new category of practitioners is the fairly educated man who professes unadulterated herbal knowledge; but he is also fitted for the cure of lunacy, prescribes aphrodisiacs and ascribes his 'exceptional herbal knowledge' to occult powers; in spite of the latter qualification, (i.e. the support of occult powers), he claims a matter-of-fact knowledge of herbs without recourse to ritual.<sup>(1)</sup> Needless to say, we have a new category of indigenous medical practitioners. All told, we have a three-fold category of indigenous medical practitioners: (a) the pagan medicine-man in the traditional sense, (b) the Christian practitioner, (c) the educated occult type.

From practitioners, we turn to patients or those who in sickness seek the help of practitioners. We have already hinted that certain Christians seek the help of the pagan medicine-man, even though the latter is expressly disavowed by the Church. Various factors account for this state of affairs. It is possible that such Christians may never have had true conversion at baptism or confirmation; Christianity may have failed to offer that escape from reality which is the essence of any religion; the influence of a predominantly pagan community may have played its part; the inadequacy of modern medical facilities, to wit: three/

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1. The writer is personally acquainted with an educated Christian herbalist at Keta, of the above category, who combines his secretarial practice with herbal treatment.

three clinics, one fully-fledged hospital, one medical officer in charge of the Anlo State (with a population of 190,053) and Ada district across the Volta. Whatever the cause, there is abundant evidence from local clergymen as well as Christian informants that Christians do consult indigenous pagan medicine-men for curative medicine as well as prophylactic insurance against 'trouble' or evil influences. In a few cases, Christians are known to have "regressed" into full ritual practice.

Because the practice is more covert than overt, Christians are less willing to own to associations with pagan medicine-men. Those who are willing to discuss the issue so completely rationalize the situation as to exonerate Christian "culprits". Here is one point of view in which a Christian analyses the composition of the pagan medicine: "It is not entirely wrong to seek medical treatment from a pagan atiketo once you have a clear idea of what you are in for. The atiketo has two elements in the healing process: a really medical one and a superstitious one, the latter covering up the former and considered as giving the healing power to the former. To discriminate the one from the other is not always easy as it is the tendency of the practitioner to hold on strongly to both, creating the impression that the ability to help at all and to achieve results - sometimes very startling results - is due to his being in communion with spirits, and that to divorce the medicinal element from the superstitious, one would make the former totally ineffective." This/

This is obviously an intelligent presentation, the implication being that a Christian who consults an atiketo has dealings with his therapeutic medicine and not with his 'superstition'. As another Christian put it, "If I were quite sick, a hospital fifty miles away, and the means of conveyance inadequate, why, I would be a fool to ignore the pagan atiketo next door. The superstitious element in his practice is quite irrelevant."

These 'explanations' naturally omit the prophylactic aspects of medicine, which from the evidence available are equally appealing, if not more so. Since these are more vociferously condemned by the churches, Christians are less likely to own up. We shall examine more of this under modern medicine below.

In this section we have exemplified the ambivalence of Christian and educational influences, the gulf between theory and practice, which in effect, adds considerable impetus to indigenous medical practice.

(iii) The Influence of Modern Medicine: Patent medicines and clinical or hospital treatments offer more direct competition to the atiketo. The confidence expressed in the medicine dispensed in the hospital or dispensary has been increasing steadily even among pagans, some of whom will readily admit the superior biochemical efficiency of this new type of medicine. The out-patient clinic at Keta is nearly always filled to capacity, patients - some of whom travel long distances - numbering fifty or more each working day. But it is also realised that the new medicine is based on a purely profane knowledge which sharply conflicts with indigenous/

indigenous medical notions. This conflict may be at the root of the suspicion of those few who have not yet learnt to trust the doctor.

One way of partially resolving conflicts has been the delimitation of the field of the doctor. He is regarded as competent to treat only a certain category of illnesses, beyond which he does not go.

According to this conception, there are two classes of sickness: dotsoafe or natural sickness and gbogbomedo or amesimedo i.e. sickness of supernatural causation. The former category is amenable to treatment in the hospital and dispensary. It is fruitless for the doctor attempting to treat the latter which remains the exclusive field of the atiketo. Obviously, the doctor is unqualified to offer non-therapeutic treatment; nor does he profess to cure impotence or sterility which constitutes one of the widely sought treatments.

Thus, in spite of the growing popularity of modern medicine, there is an alleged gap which the atiketo claims to fill. Not a few cases have been cited in which patients critically sick or whose conditions have been worsening have regained health on being withdrawn from hospitals in favour of 'home treatment'. In other circumstances, according to my informants, cases declared 'hopeless' by the doctor have proved 'hopeful' at the hands of the atiketo. Such cases are generally traced not to the ineptitude of the doctor, but to gbogbomedo (sickness of supernatural causation) for which the doctor is a priori unqualified.

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In summary, it would seem clear from the above discussions that in spite of the negative influence of government and missions, as well as the role of modern medicine, the traditional functions of indigenous medicine have not been superseded in modern times. The indigenous medicine supplements modern medicine and opens fresh avenues among literates and Christians.

(5)

Ritual Values or Religious Sanctions

We have reserved for later considerations the influence of modern social changes on religious sanctions; since indigenous sanctions cut across our four religious concepts, they are best discussed as a unit. In this section, we examine this problem.

As earlier discussed,<sup>(1)</sup> various sources provide sanctions or incentives for conformity to the socially approved norms or the body of sanctioned custom obtaining among the Anloawo. As in pre-literate societies, religion occupies a very wide segment of the total field. Most of the norms or the moral code obtaining here, though they serve purely social ends, are linked to certain magico-religious concepts. A certain act or behaviour is bad, reprehensible, 'sinful' because it is disapproved by the community deity or deities; and 'sin' is supernaturally punished, automatically or through human agents. Thus the fear of the unpleasant consequences of 'sin' conduces to good behaviour. Conversely,/  


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1. See Chapter 5 (4).

Conversely, misfortune or unhappiness may be traced to supernatural displeasure and retribution.

In view of the punitive measures implied by these concepts, they have naturally conflicted with natural justice. Where overt negative sanctions operate through visible intermediate human agencies, the government has taken steps to ban such institutions. In the case of spontaneous, automatic retribution for specific 'sins' or crimes, it is the general effect of contact rather than any specific influence of government that is gradually conducing to change in belief.

Thus the subject readily lends itself to discussion under two categories:

- (i) Supernatural sanctions operating through human agencies.
- (ii) Spontaneous supernatural sanctions.

We shall briefly examine these categories in the light of modern "social change".

(i) Supernatural sanctions operating through human agencies: In this connection trial by ordeal or supernatural detection of crime has been ruled illegal by the government; so is the custom of fiasidixexe, a sort of penal servitude by which a person is bonded to serve for life in a cult house, in atonement for a specific crime. The nyiko custom, an effective supernatural sanction for a series of anti-social conduct has similarly been suspended. In the personal cases, the application of medicine or charm to right one's wrong is disapproved and known offenders are prosecuted. Organized legal sanctions largely supersede these/



these negative supernatural sanctions.

Whereas in the traditional society legal sanctions operated largely through the medium of supernatural sanctions, in the modern society, legal sanctions apply on purely legal basis as codified in ordinances. We shall examine the effects of this change where they apply.

Of immediate effect is the ostensible release of the lineage or family from group responsibility for individual misconduct. Of course, the moral rectitude of children ever remains the personal responsibility of parents and lineage-heads; but the 'sins( of individuals are no longer seriously believed to rebound on the lineage as a whole. This at once declasses certain categories of crime and makes others less heinous, as lineage controls become less efficient. It goes without saying that a chain-effect is produced whereby the moral conscience grows less keen, the norms or social sentiments less stable and virtue less of an ideal. This may be seen in terms of the Nyiko sanctions. Lineages do not surrender their own criminals to the legal substitutes for Nyiko because they are no longer in fear of supernatural reprobation. Conversely, the anti-social practices that Nyiko sought to proscribe - practice of bad medicine, theft, adultery, indebtedness, untruthfulness, filial disobedience - although they remain anti-social behaviour - some of these prosecuted at court - have lost some of their traditional social stigma.

Similarly, though fiasidixexe, an adjunct of trial by ordeal, /

ordeal, has not completely died out, lineage obligations in the matter are no longer thought important. The individual who has offended the Fiasidi cult bears full responsibility. This implies that on the death of the victim, any existing contract is terminated. No longer does the lineage of the victim feel obliged to make replacement. (1)

These illustrations are not so much an explanation as an expression of the views and feelings of the people concerned. Most elderly illiterates seem quite critical of the scrapping of their supernatural sanctions. The feeling seems to be that these should have supplemented the new legal sanctions. The official elimination of trial by ordeal is particularly resented. As one chief at Klikor put it, 'not everyone of us is gifted with facility in self-expression, and if justice depends entirely on a person's oral ability, what great injustice can be done!' He feels that an accused should have the privilege of 'trial by ordeal' as a supplement to the legal machinery. Needless to say, this expresses firm conviction in the old methods. Indeed, my informants have confided to me that, in the villages, where public opinion strongly favours it, both plaintiff and defendant, by mutual agreement, may submit to trial by ordeal in secret, after formal court decisions. It has not been sufficiently clarified what happens in the nature of restitution or retribution after the trial by ordeal, and especially where the ordeal reverses the decisions of the court. My informants felt they were/

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1. The institution, as now illegally practised, is rapidly disintegrating.

were treading illegal ground and hence their reluctance to pursue the matter to its logical conclusion. As to the nature of the ordeal under such circumstances, all are agreed that age-old methods of detection by the infliction of some kind of pain has been largely superseded by koklodada, literally, tossing the fowl, where the lying posture of a fowl, when killed, determines guilt or innocence.<sup>(1)</sup> It is obvious from these discussions that the institutions concerned have not been entirely superseded; their functions are held valid, though the institutions themselves undergo some modifications. We shall examine the other aspect of the subject.

(ii) Spontaneous supernatural sanctions: In this category, certain actions automatically evoke supernatural penalties without the direct intervention of human agencies. The sphere of application is diffuse and penalties include every conceivable ailment or misfortune for which there may or may not be immediate known causes. Some of these may be traced to failures in ritual obligations to the ancestors, and to the trowo, while others express the indignation of the supernatural powers to the non-observance of social contracts with religious validity. There is obviously, a certain amount of unavoidable overlapping between this category and supernatural sanctions operating primarily through human media.

This is a field which has not been much influenced by government or any agent of contact, because the concept lies more in/

1. This system of divination has spread from Northern Ghana. The head of a fowl is partly severed and then the fowl permitted to knock about for a few seconds till it falls dead. To die with breast upward signifies innocence; with breast downward it implies guilt.

in the realm of thought than practice. It is also the very prop of religion itself, for religion survives on the very idea of human dependence upon supernatural will. The flourishing profession of diviners and related ritual specialists is a function of this belief. However, like any other aspect of indigenous religion functioning within modern framework, certain novel trends are noticeable.

In the observance of specific taboos implying some overt behaviour, where such taboos are enjoined by, or related to the public cults, observance is less keen than where they are related to private cults and lineal ancestors. This is obviously a corollary of our observations on the functions of 'public' and 'private' cults in the contemporary scene. Take, for example, the taboo on beholding the person of the Paramount Chief, especially on ceremonial occasions. This was in deference to the status of the Paramount Chief as the High Priest of Nyigbla, and as the highest official in the land. We have observed how the modern functions of the Paramount Chief have rendered the taboo needless. We have also noted the evanescence of Nyigbla taboos.

One more general observation is pertinent, though it may be subject to further investigations. It has more to do with middle-of-the-road pagans (i.e. persons with one foot in the pagan camp, and the other elsewhere) than fully fledged pagans. It seems to me from field observations, that such pagans, even though they/

they generally observe pagan taboos in fear of supernatural sanctions, are less taken in by taboos which prescribe specific retributions or penalties - such as blindness, insanity, death - than where retributions are couched in generalities such as sickness or misfortune. Of similar effect is the case of 'immediate retribution' as distinct from 'subsequent retribution', in the cause-effect relationship. Like the 'specific retribution', the former (i.e. immediate retribution) has been losing some of its supernatural effect. These are more or less hypothetical deductions from my conversations with semi-literates as well as certain illiterate Christians. We may illustrate with clans and their taboos. As indicated elsewhere, each clan has a quasi-totem animal, plant, mineral or fish taboo. The Dzovia (chiefly) clan, for example, taboos the kind of fish known as dzovia to members. To break the taboo is to suffer immediate severe skin rashes which may lead to death. As one semi-literate member of the clan confided to me, the first day he tried the fish by accident, he felt so guilty and apprehensive; but when weeks later there were no rashes, dzovia became his favourite dish. He felt convinced that if the retribution were couched in terms of sickness at one time or the other in life, he would have been more hesitant in breaking the taboo a second time.

In this chapter, we have surveyed the indigenous cults as they function in the contemporary scene. Here and there we have noted ritual modifications, reinterpretations of old cults, the/

the mixture of old and new, or the old with new ideals and interests: belief in Mawu has been preserved and given new expressions; new ideals have crept into the generally malleable 'private' cults; ancestral worship has been preserved, but ritual is clothed differently, in parts; the indigenous medicine supplements modern medicine, and performs new roles peculiar to the contemporary situation; while some of the supernatural sanctions have been superseded by purely legal sanctions, belief in supernatural power to affect for good and evil largely remains the mainstay of sanctions.

These changes in ritual or new emphasis in cult-group organizations are obviously the inexorable, unrelenting dictations of a new 'world' in which survival is so much a function of social adjustment in terms of the new values of the existing world. Literacy finding its way into a supremely conservative, illiterate, secret cult; reinterpretations of old cults in terms of Christianity, civic duties, social obligations, community welfare, are indisputably indices of a bid for social adjustment to the modern way. But imperfect adaptations have been no less evident. Some of the fundamental values of the old sharply conflict with the new resulting in the barest minimum of adaptation. The evanescent 'public' cults are typical examples. As religious institutions, they are less adequately equipped to grapple with the onerous problems of a modern world, and therefore, less effective organs of social control. After all, the highest function/



function of a religion is the control and protection afforded a social unit. In the next chapter we shall examine a further stage in the process of adaptation and social control.

## CHAPTER IX

### MODERN ATIKE CULTS

The previous chapter has been largely characterized by some sort of "religious alchemy", a process of dressing indigenous cults in new outfit - old wine in new wineskins, one might say. In the present chapter, we have a substantially identical process, but of a slightly different hue; an African traditional cult, alien to the Anlo culture, but adapted to the latter and partially fitted in modern habiliments. Analytically, the composite cultural - complex, unlike the subject matter of our previous chapter, embraces more than two cultural components: the source African culture, the Anlo culture, and European elements and complexes. But what is of supreme importance is not the heterogenous cultural background or "the mechanical pitch-forking of elements" - to use Fortes' phraseology,<sup>(1)</sup> but the reintegration of a new religious group in response to fresh psycho-social needs. Naturally, the emphasis, here again, is on the functional value of the new group.

We are referring to the Atike cults from Northern Ghana which within the last quarter century have been actively integrating with the Anlo culture and assuming local colour. It is unfortunate that there are no documentary materials on the historical background of the Atike cults in Anlo. In consequence, we must rely/

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1. "Culture Contact as a Dynamic Process", Africa Vol.VII, p.26.

rely exclusively on the evidences of informants supplemented by personal observations. It is hoped that the present chapter will lay the ground for subsequent investigations of the field among the Anlo-awo.

The word Atike (literally, tree root) implies therapeutic medicine; it is synonymous with ama or processed herb, generally regarded as indispensable in the therapeutic, and non-therapeutic prophylactic charms and amulets. Curative powers and "magical" potency constitute the inseparable elements of atike. The atike cults are renowned for their competence in these two directions. The designation is thus most appropriate. It is descriptive of their functions: to cure by supernatural medium or media.

During the period of field-study, various atike cults were functioning in various parts of the Anlo State; they included Blekete or Nana Kunde, Nana Gosor, Tobuya, Sakra, Nana Agosra, Alafia, Anlisi, Tsingeli. All of these were believed to have originated from a common source - Northern Ghana through Akan (Fanti) country. A large measure of similarity in ritual ascribes to them membership of the same family unit, much like different but structurally similar trowo (deities) in the hands of different persons. Blekete or Nana Kunde, the earliest arrival, and, possibly, the oldest of the lot, has been known in Anlo for over a quarter-century; Tsingeli, the latest, made its debut in the early 1940's. Thus each of these cults has functioned in Anlo for at least a decade. It will be needless duplication examining the internal organization of each of these by turns. In order to delineate fully the details of/

of ritual and cult organization, so necessary for our theoretical developments, we shall restrict ourselves primarily to Blekete, the oldest and the best known of the Atike cults in Anlo.

(1)

### Characteristic Features

As earlier stated, Blekete, officially designated Nana Kunde, has functioned in Anlo over a quarter-century. Though alien to the Anlo culture, it is basically African, but expresses Christian and Islamic features as well.

Most of the elderly Blekete priests interviewed were first inducted into membership of the cult outside their own tribal community; it was always a town or village in Fantiland (along the coast), although subsequent training for priesthood was acquired in Anlo. All the priests are vaguely aware that the cult is not native to the Fanti, that it originated somewhere in Northern Ghana. Christensen, who has carried out research into a related cult (Tigare), states that it is not indigenous to the coastal area, and that it was brought to the tropical rain-forest region of Ghana from the Sudan or grassland area of the northern Ivory Coast. (1)

At the time of research, Blekete was fairly widely disseminated over Anlo, along the coast, in the rural districts inland and in the villages across the Keta Lagoon. In some villages/

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1. James B. Christensen, "The Tigare Cult of West Africa" in Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Art and Letters, Vol. 39, 1954, p. 389.

villages there were two or more Blekete "Temples" (Kponuwo), indicating the strength of following. At Dzelukofe and Anloga where the bulk of my material has been collected, each had at least four Kponuwo. Nearby villages such as Tegbi and Woe had two each. Agbozome of the Somé division had as many as six; Penyi farther inland, at least three. This is expressive of the generally wide interest in, and devotion to this cult.

The cult itself is generally conceived as a vodu i.e. an impersonal power which in course of time became "animistic"; it has naturally all the features of a tro; it is worshipped and made sacrificial offering. To draw a distinction between the generality of voduwo obtaining in Anlo and this particular species of vodu, the descriptive terminology, atike-vodu (literally, medicinal vodu) is sometimes applied to the latter.<sup>(1)</sup>

Now back to Blekete. The character of this atike-vodu is determined by two major "god" forms, Nana Kunde and Mena Ablewah, male and female characters respectively, and a minor female "goddess", Sakra.<sup>(2)</sup> These are symbolised by various ritual/

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1. Some of my informants have drawn moral distinctions between atike-vodu and vodu. The latter is said to be truculent, executing orders good and bad, like an Aerial at the disposal of a Prospero (in Shakespeare's "Tempest"). Atike-vodu on the other hand, may never be entreated to commit murder or other forms of atrocity; it wreaks vengeance on anyone who so commissions it. This claim to morality par excellence, is said to underlie the dogma of all atike-voduwo.
  2. Sakra may be worshipped independently, in which case it assumes the role of a major "god" form.

ritual objects, the most representative being the following: a black bag believed to contain kolanuts and herbs usually suspended against a wall; two wooden stools; two spears or javelins; the skull of a dog, cow or cat; drum apparatus; a large drum of Northern Ghana type, a small one, a rattle and a gong. The black bag is said to constitute the essence of the cult. Sacrificial animals include cow, ram, dog, cat, fowl, pigeon. Not all of these sacrificial animals are permitted eating for members. Some are strictly taboo. In general, animals sacrificed to Nana Kunde are forbidden to members; those offered to Mena Ablewah may rightly constitute meat for feasts. A feast is usually the by-product of sacrifices to Mena Ablewah. The following mnemonic guide is a translation from the vernacular:

What Nana has eaten, no one can eat;

What Mena has eaten, is food for all.

There is no hard and fast rule as to which animals must be sacrificed to Nana and which to Mena. Each cult-group is privileged to make its own choice.<sup>(1)</sup> Sacrifices to Nana Kunde and/

1. It is highly probable that this latitude operates to enable each cult-group to come to terms with community taste. In Anlo where the flesh of the dog is usually held carrion fit for vultures, it is likely to be sacrificed to Nana, even when members have overcome their distaste for this meat. One version, however, would completely disregard any relevance of the sacrifices to "community taste" and set the whole practice on a pinnacle of morality. Nana, as the senior and most venerable member of the Blekete pantheon, they explain, symbolises the highest standard of perfection attainable. Only those mortals who have attained almost comparable standards in morals and integrity may partake of the same meat with Nana. In exceptional circumstances when a man feels he is pure in heart, he may have access to Nana's offering. But fear of the supernatural consequences - which is instant death in the event of fraud - does not permit the priest to trust members with Nana's food.



and Mena Ablewah may be offered any day of the week except Monday and Friday; Sakra accepts offering on Monday and Friday and this accounts for her inclusion in the pantheon.

Membership of the cult is open to men, women and children attached to their parents. There is no period of schooling or prolonged initiation. All there is to do is to signify one's interest and preparedness to abide by the rules, and conform to the decorum of membership. Then follows the brief ritual of atikedudu or "eating the medicine". Kneeling before the priest and the Blekete altar, the would-be neophyte makes the following declaration: "I dedicate myself to you Nana and your services. Help my children to live; save my family from evil influences." The priest shares with the initiate a kolanut which has been sanctified on the altar. The chewing of the nut and the shake of hands receives the initiate into full membership. On rising, the initiate is given preliminary instruction in the taboos or rules he must observe as a member.<sup>(1)</sup> This leads us to a discussion of the rules of membership.

(2)

#### Membership Rules and Morality

The taboos or rules of membership express the obligations of members to the cult and some of the retributions that follow as consequences of failure to live up to standards. Most of these/

1. Children under ten years of age received into membership may also "eat the medicine" but without the vows to Blekete. They share the kola with the priest but are exempt from the observance of the rules of membership. Later, when they have attained maturity and are able to discern right from wrong, they are invited by the priest for re-initiation, when the whole ritual is gone over and the taboos enjoined as for adults.

these rules are in the nature of moral precepts, not unlike the ten commandments of the Old Testament. The following is an English rendering, a free translation of the vernacular version of the rules, as I copied them from the notebook of a priest at Dzelukofe:

1. Honour your father and mother.
2. Do not impulsively decline the meals of your parents or wife (or wives).
3. You must not commit murder.
4. You must not bear false witness against anyone. To profess to see what has not been seen is gross dishonesty.
5. You must not steal.
6. You must not covet your neighbour's property or his wife.
7. Each member - male or female - is expected to marry according to the rules of the cult.
8. If sickness brings you to Blekete, make a clean breast of all your sins, and your health is assured.
9. Abortion is a criminal act, tantamount to murder. An abortionist shall be subject to the following penal restitution: a ram, a dog, a guinea-fowl, two fowls, two pigeons, a sum of five pounds, three pans of kola-nuts, three bottles of liquor. Failure to make full restitution means death at the hands of Blekete, for the wages of sin is death.
10. Do not indulge in falsehood for it is vicious. An imposter shall make atonement with three pans of kola-nuts (each pan of 24 nuts) and three bottles of liquor.
11. No devotee shall practise witchcraft, nor malign another as a witch.
12. It is the duty of members to help others, alert those in imminent danger and extricate those in difficulties.
13. Members of Blekete are enjoined to pray for the well-being of mankind, including their enemies.
- 14./

14. Women in attendance at prayer must remove their shoes and head-dress.
15. Men in attendance at prayer must remove their hats and shoes and pipes. Failure to comply is gross irreverence for Blekete. One bottle of liquor, a pan of kolanuts and a sum of six shillings shall be exacted from offenders.
16. Members must remember Sunday and make it a day of prayer.
17. No female devotee shall entertain indecent sex-play, as for example, cohabitation out of doors.
18. Similarly, it is reprehensible for a male member to make sexual advances to a woman out of doors.
19. Divorce, unless sanctioned by the cult, is prohibited. Each approved divorce shall have been most fully examined by the entire cult membership. In the event of divorce, the bride-wealth - as fixed by the cult - shall be restored. Bride-wealth, according to cult specification, includes a dog, a ram, two yards calico, a mat, a sum of £2: 10/-, three bottles of liquor, three pans of kolanuts.
20. No member shall seek the help of a diviner (boko) to be rid of witches, let alone be prevailed upon to make offerings (vosasa).
21. To be haunted by witches is a sign of supernatural disfavour. In such predicament, it is expedient to make full confession to Blekete, who has absolute power over such influences.
22. You must not be stingy.
23. Do not feed on the carcass of any animal.
24. Do not feed on pork.
25. You must not kill the viper (fli) because it is an Awusa (Kausa) deity.
26. Dissatisfied members may withdraw from active membership when they please.
27. Do not forswear or mention Kunde in vain. Perjurors shall be subject to the following restitution: a dog, a ram, a cat, two fowls, two pigeons, three pans of kolanuts, three bottles of liquor, a sum of five pounds. The criminal must pay for his crime.
28. No member shall be gainfully employed on Sunday.
- 29./

29. It is malicious for a member to malign or entertain base suspicions of another.
30. Devotees in need should feel free to speak their minds to Blekete in prayer and also make commensurate pledges. Such pledges must be redeemed as soon as goals are attained.
31. Votaries are expected to pay annual dues towards an annual feast at the close of the calendar year. Delinquent members shall stand trial before a court of fellow members, and if their conduct warrants it, shall be expelled from cult membership.

The content of membership rules at once suggests a heterogeneous cultural background with corresponding religious accretions. On the one hand we see Northern Ghana, Fanti, Anlo and possibly Western European cultural elements; on the other we see indigenous African religious beliefs and practices to which Christian and Moslem elements have been grafted. Rules 14 and 15 which prohibit shoes and head-dresses in the Blekete "temple" are reminiscent of Mohammedan practices. So is the avoidance of pork as an item of diet (vide rule 24). The rule against stinginess (vide rule 22) may reflect Moslem almsgiving enjoined on all the "faithful".

The Christian components are not hard to delineate. The first few injunctions are not unlike the ten commandments of the Old Testament: "Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, honour thy father and thy mother, remember the Sabbath day, etc." The emphasis on the observance of Sunday as a day of prayer and freedom from gainful employment is strikingly similar to Christian tenets. The Christian ethical doctrine of "my brother's keeper" is most adequately exemplified in the injunctions to pray for mankind, including one's enemies, to alert/

alert those in danger and not to cherish evil thoughts of others. However, the fame of Blekete as pre-eminently qualified to cure cases of witchcraft and dispel witches, as well as the general set-up will readily suggest features of an indigenous African religious cult, which, in fact, it is.

On the purely cultural level, the kolanuts, the injunction against the killing of the viper, as well as the "toga" worn by the priest, the drums and some of the percussion instruments are definitely of Northern Ghana extraction. The terms "Nana" and "Mena" are of Fanti lineage; they are honorific terms, the equivalents of grandfather or chief and old lady respectively. On the Anlo cultural side of the ledger, filial respect (amebubu), the kernel of education in every home is amply reflected; the taboos on murder, false witness, theft, dishonesty, adultery are not unlike the Nyiko taboos discussed in the traditional background.<sup>(1)</sup> Similarly, the injunction against indiscreet sex relations, the return of the bride-wealth where the woman seeks divorce are the direct expressions of local observances. In the absence of a national festival comparable to the Akan "Akwasidae" and "Wukudae" or "Anwonada",<sup>(2)</sup> Easter and New Year (particularly the latter) are lustily celebrated. In the field of ritual specialization, the form and structure of Blekete priesthood is substantially identical to indigenous Anlo practice./

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1. Vide Chapter V (3).

2. These are the traditional Akan forty-day festivals which have been adopted by related medicine cults in Akan areas.

Anlo practice.

(3)

### Ritual Specialists

During the period of field-study, one priest at Kpoglu near Klikor was reputed to be the oldest living Blekete priest in Anlo at whose feet many had acquired training.<sup>(1)</sup> This elderly priest was officially referred to as Busumfo<sup>(2)</sup> or Papa. Annually he invited his "children" i.e. former trainees to a refresher course, or as the people themselves would put it, "to speak new ideas". This was an occasion of unlimited jollification. There was no obligation to make gifts, but each "child" made gifts according to his means. The whole practice bears close resemblance to the annual meeting of a Boko (diviner) and his bokoviwo (sons of a boko) discussed earlier.

The children of Busumfo who have established independent cults are referred to as Osofowo (singular, osofo). Until<sup>the</sup>/advent of Blekete, the word osofo has been exclusively applied to ministers of Christian religion. Perhaps, in the adoption of this term by the ritual specialists of Blekete, it is hoped to bring the cult in closer alignment with the Christian church, and thus differentiate Blekete from the generality of indigenous cults. (This aspect of the subject will be further examined.) Of course, the Osofo performs roles identical to the/

1. Notwithstanding repeated attempts, I was unable to interview this elderly priest.
2. This is a corrupted Akan word, "obosumfo", meaning high priest.



the traditional tronua (tro-priest).

Serving directly beneath the Osofo is the Osofo-kuma; he is the deputy serving in the absence of the Osofo. In a sense, he is regarded as serving apprenticeship for the office of Osofo, and, naturally, he has a substantial knowledge of the roles of the Osofo. But apprenticeship in this instance differs from the traditional approach; the trainee (Osofo-kuma) is nominated from the rank and file and is thus a position of merit, an achieved status. Qualifications for the position include initiative, respect - inspiring personality and excellence of conduct from the standpoint of morality, as conceived by Blekete. (1)

Two more officers are also worthy of note. These are the Ekpomega and the Hawodzikpola. The former is virtually chief of the cult and performs roles not unlike those of a chief or the elder of a ward. He settles intra-cult disputes, acts as the cult representative in lay matters affecting the welfare of the cult in the wider community. Age and experience within and without the cult are the essential prerequisites for nomination to this position. The other specialist, Hawodzikpola, as the name implies, is caretaker of the cult membership. He is the chief instructor in the laws and prayers and general decorum of cult membership. The duties of the Hawodzikpola bear close resemblance to those of the Katuidawo in the Yewe cult/

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1. One may compare the role of the Osofo-kuma with the catechist aspiring for the ministry.

cult hierarchy.<sup>(1)</sup> There is thus some opportunity for social mobility for the male rank and file, a condition fairly characteristic of some of the progressive "private" cults (vide Yewe).

Now to the training for the priesthood. The obligations and requisites along this line, have similarly been linked to the traditional practice, although slight differences are discernible. Any fully-fledged male member of the cult, i.e. one who has "eaten the medicine", may apprentice himself to an experienced or fully recognized Blekete priest. My osof informants, as already noted, underwent training at Kpoglu (near Klikor) at the feet of one of the oldest and most experienced Blekete priests in Anlo. Each osof had served an apprenticeship varying between four and six years. Of course, they were not obliged to make a second home at Kpoglu throughout this long period. During the initial period of indenture, they were obliged to reside in the house of the trainer-priest (Busumfo), but thereafter, they were privileged to come and go for the rest of the apprenticeship.

It is believed that during training a more intensive education in the rules of Blekete is acquired. There is training in the slaughter of sacrificial animals, the Blekete dancing art (Blekete dances are far less vigorous than the indigenous Anlo dances), as well as general administrative knowledge of the successful running of a cult. Followers' belief that/

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1. Vide Chapter IV (4).

that a substantial part of the long period of apprenticeship is spent in training in herbalism is not fully supported by the priests whose response suggests little or no training in herbalism. It is possible that there is a certain basic training in herbalism and the rest trusted to the "magical" powers of Blekete, who, it is alleged, does the actual healing. In the opinion of one osofo, Blekete reveals in dreams and visions the right remedy for each sickness. This will presuppose some basic knowledge of the chemistry of herbs to effect the right compound, if the medicine is to be wholly therapeutic. The receipt of the "black bag", the essence of Blekete, marks the termination of apprenticeship and the abrogation of indenture. The occasion may be timed to coincide with the annual reunion of the Busumfo and his "children".

There is no stipulated fee exacted for the services of training. The trainee performs what is known as Dzadodo; the nearest English equivalent is "tipping" in appreciation of services rendered (or services to be rendered). Dzadodo for my osofo informants, varied between £5 and £25.<sup>(1)</sup> It depends upon the means of the payee, as well as his prospects and the special attractions for training as a Blekete priest.

(4)

#### The Attractions of Membership

Priests and votaries alike are naturally attracted to Blekete/

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1. Compare Tigare in Fantiland where the cost of training varies between £40 and £600 (vide Christensen, op.cit. p.395).

Blekete for their convictions in the supernatural powers of Nana Kunde and his ability to achieve specific results, notably the cure of sickness and the offer of prophylactic potency against evil influences. But in a socio-cultural phenomenon such as Blekete, it may be inadequate accounting for the growing popularity of the cult in terms of a single factor. Other factors, more or less important, play their part. From intimate conversations with members, it seems that the social or recreational facilities offered by the cult, as well as its prestige value are equally important. We may subsume the various attractions under the following broad labels:

- (i) Curative and protective power.
- (ii) Social or recreational facilities
- (iii) Prestige value.

(i) Curative and protective power: In an earlier discussion we classified sickness under two categories - dotsoafe or sickness of natural causation and gbogbomedo or sickness of supernatural causation. The latter may sometimes be traced to the displeasure of the lineal ancestors and the trowo; in such circumstances the appropriate propitiatory rites pacify the spiritual agents and restore the patient to health. But recovery or normalcy is not so readily assured when evil spirits, including witchcraft, are believed at the back of gbogbomedo. The unrivalled claim of Blekete to deal effectively with such sickness and to offer appropriate prophylactic protection against evil influences of all kind, will naturally commend it to a people whose sickness is traced more often to supernatural/

supernatural causes than not. A couple of testimonies will bring to relief the curative and protective power of Blekete as an attraction for membership.

One recurrent question in my "interview - questionnaire" with devotees of Blekete was as follows: "Why did you decide to become a member of this cult"? or "Why did you decide to train as a priest"? The following is an answer from a priest at Dzelukofe:

'Some fifteen years ago I was a relatively prosperous trader at Senyabereku (in Fanti). Even though I was no Christian, I attended Sunday services as regularly as I could manage. One day I fell sick; within a very short time my condition so badly deteriorated that there was no denying the fact that I was at the brink of death. Later, I found myself in the home of a local Blekete priest. My friends must have conveyed me there while I was in an unconscious state. My recovery was as dramatic as the onset of the sickness. I had no need of a vision to convince me that my sickness was an amesimedo and that I owed my life to the cult to which I had been brought. I "ate the medicine" even before I became fully convalescent. On my return to Dzelukofe, I felt I might be doing a great service to my friends if I introduced this cult to my community. Aside from protection from evil influences, it has a sound moral background. This was the prime motive when I entered into apprenticeship at Kpoglu.'

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The testimony speaks loudly for itself. The priest felt, no doubt, that his sickness was due to the machinations of jealous rivals who resented the relative prosperity of a foreign tribesman. Below is another testimony from a priest at Anloga:

'Several years ago I served as leader of a drum party at Anloga. Our main objectives were mutual-aid, fun and recreation. In the bid to outshine one other party in the community, we soon became bitter rivals. Our drum parties degenerated into Halowu (i.e. antagonistic drum parties). Each party composed songs full of the harshest epithets and invectives against members of the other. So strained were our relations that we had no qualms in using charms against each other. As leader of my party, I felt it my duty to protect the interests of my group. Naturally, I had recourse to all the protective charms I could come by; but these were not always efficacious, since a powerful charm easily succumbed to a more powerful one. Our drum parties were, in course of time, disbanded on orders of the chiefs who could not bear the seeds of rancour we were sowing in the community. This did not ease the situation, for we remained in mortal fear of each other. It was at the height of this despair that I learnt of Blekete as a prophylaxis against all "magical" influences. But I had not the faintest idea what were the rules of membership. I travelled to Asanyra (in Fantiland) where I "ate the medicine". It worked. I felt quite at ease with a real peace of mind I never/



never had before. Much later, the idea dawned on me that I might be relasing the fears of my friends if I helped to bring the cult within their reach. This was the original motive that led me to Kpoglu for my long apprenticeship.'

This testimony also speaks for itself. Blekete offers protection against all "magical" influences and cures amesimedo or gbogbomedo. A patient may be referred to a hospital, clinic or dispensary when the osofo is convinced that the sickness is dotsoafe ("natural sickness"), and therefore amenable to modern medicine. How then does one overtly distinguish between both categories of sickness?

According to the information available, chronic headache or neuralgia and severe stomach pains associated with frequent bowel movements may be traced to supernatural causes. On my first visit to the compound of the priest at Dzelukofe, I was shown a two-year old boy who had been brought over by his grandfather. The boy had been suffering acute stomach pains with continual defecation even though he hardly ate. He had been twice examined in the out-patient clinic by the medical officer at Keta. Diagnosis was fever. In both cases it was believed there was no response to treatment. According to the priest, when the boy was alleged to have malarial fever and yet did not have temperature; when he defecated more often than he ate, those were guides that there was something mysterious about the sickness; it was gbogbomedo.<sup>(1)</sup>

Other/

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1. Three days later when I revisited the compound, the boy had been discharged from the "clinic". Recovery had been complete, I was informed.

Other species of gbogbomodo include the successive death of one's children (dzikudsikui), and sterility.<sup>(1)</sup> Evil influences are believed at the back of such family calamities. They are never congenital. Like an experienced practitioner coping with a chronic case, Blekete is believed capable of reaching the heart of the "disease" by destroying the symptoms basic to the diseased state, i.e. by the apprehension of the evil spirits at the back of it. The large majority of women who did not join the cult in sickness did so on account of these attractions: prospects for the termination of dzikuidzikui, and the sterile state.

Of equal importance is the fame of Blekete in offering insurance against jealous rivals and the machinations of bad spirits. Under the Blekete sanctuary, one is believed immune to the attacks of all shades of malevolent influences. The testimony of the osofo from Anloga is a case in point. The only pre-requisite for members enjoying the full benefit of this insurance is that they make a clean breast of the past life.<sup>(2)</sup>

It is this aspect of the functions of Blekete which offers considerable attractions for the literate and semi-literate members of the community, including school children. Like the indigenous/

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1. Seeking the help of ritual specialists in child bearing (dofefle) is a common practice.
  2. Compare confessions among adherents of Kune in Ashanti (vide B. Ward, Some Observations on Religious Cults in Ashanti, Africa, Vol. 26 (1956) pp. 47-60.

indigenous ritual specialists, Blekete priests claim a following of clerical employees, semi-literate mechanics and artisans, and school children. One Osofo claims proteges in French Togoland, Dakar, and Europe, men who had been "sanctified" before departure for various assignments. We shall examine other attractions for membership.

(ii) Social and recreational function: Opportunities for drumming and dancing constitute an essential feature of the Blekete cult. Regularly each Sunday afternoon (unless the weather is inclement) members assemble in the shrine compound for four to five hours of continuous drumming, singing and dancing. At Dzelukofe where I witnessed these drum exhibitions many a Sunday, spectators often included Christians and literates. It seems that the negative attitude of Christianity to indigenous drumming and dancing has not much affected traditional interest.

Indigenous Anlo drumming exhibitions for fun is becoming less frequent; they seem to centre more around funerals than social recreations. Economic incentives accentuated by wage labour and geographical mobility have their part to play in this. It is against this background that the regular Sunday exhibitions of the Blekete cult must be appreciated. It is not unlikely that people are attracted to the cult solely by this form of recreation. It may also help to sustain the interest of members when the glamour of membership in a new, and therefore, wonderful organization has partly faded.

(iii) Prestige value: We have been discussing the attractions for/

for membership of Blekete. It is my conviction that besides other attractions, a prestige value attaching to membership serves as an additional factor. This prestige must be found in the "syncretic" adjustment afforded the cult membership.

Christianity, we have noted, has prestige because it is the one religion of the administrators who themselves are symbols of prestige. The paternalistic attitude of Christians is a case in point. The teaching of the missionary which is fully supported by the administrator, places the indigenous cult down the bottom of the social scale. But for one reason or the other, Christianity remains a minority religion whose adherents are not completely satisfied by it.

Now what is the status of Blekete in this religious dichotomy? As we have hitherto implied, Blekete seeks alignment with Christianity (and Mohammedanism), while at the same time performing roles akin to indigenous religious cults. It has a sound moral background, not unlike Christianity; there is appeal to individual conscience. At Dzelukofe, Sunday observances include prayers between five and six a.m. Members are obliged to have no dealings with charms or non-therapeutic medicine, or have recourse to diviners. In his earnest desire to dissociate his cult from indigenous religious practice, the priest at Dzelukofe would exclude from recognition even lineage deities (afedome trowo). Thus adherents gain the impression that Blekete holds a status analogous to one of the Christian sects or denominations.

But unlike Christianity, Blekete claims to have answers/

answers to pressing social problems: molestation by evil spirits, insecurity, sterility, dzikuidzikui, etc. This, added to the prestige factor, will naturally make Blekete appealing to both professing Christians and pagans.

Indeed, all the Blekete priests consulted laid claim to Christian followers, although only two of my intimate informants were able to furnish approximate figures which I have reasons to believe are fairly reliable. Below is a statistical representation of information from these two sources:

	Total Membership	Baptised Catholic	Christians Protestant	Unbaptised "Christians" (1)
Priest at Dzelukofe	± 150	± 15	± 10	± 20
Priest at Anloga	± 100	± 5	± 15	?

These are significant figures in communities where Christians are by far in the minority. It does not seem to occur to Christian members that membership of Blekete violates their Christian status. The priest at Dzelukofe is unaware of any open criticism of his cult by the Christian churches. The priest at Anloga has been complimented by a Protestant pastor who suggested a formal merger of his cult with the church. (2) To the Christian members, therefore, nothing is lost by open association/

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1. These are pagans who attend church out of interest; some of these may be catechumens.
  2. This was obviously a psychological approach to conversion which the priest did not grasp.

association with Blekete. It is association with the "indigenous cults" which abases one or reduces one's status and invites the sanctions of the church.

Needless to say, pagan members with no interest in church or Christianity feel socially elevated since they consort with Christians and believe they follow Christian ritual in all respects. Following the teachings of their priests, both pagan and Christian members have often exclaimed, "Wokata dekawoe" (i.e. they are all of a type), implying that Blekete occupies a comparable position with the Christian churches. Taking into account the conflicts of Christians apparently enjoying the prestige of Christian status, but in other respects not completely satisfied by the Christian religion, it is obvious that followers of Blekete would be better adapted than Christians.<sup>(1)</sup>

It is against this background of adjustment, the struggle for better adaptation, social and personal integration in the uncertainties of a modern world that the structure and function of Blekete must be appraised.

(5)

#### The Appraisal

At the turn of the century when Spieth wrote his Die Religion der Eweer in Sud Togo, he observed that there was hardly any cult from Northern Ghana in Eweland. The sprinkling of amedzrotrowo/

1. It must be emphasized that adaptation is not synonymous with the truth or falsity of a religion. From the standpoint of the social anthropologist, the latter is irrelevant (vide, Radcliffe-Brown, Structure and Function in Primitive Society, pp. 154-55).



amedzrotrowo (strange or foreign cults) from the eastern and western neighbours were barely tolerated; they were relatively unprestigious; they were down the bottom of the social scale. Considerable suspicion surrounded these cults because as Spieth explained, they did not "make one" with the land; they did not prosper war.<sup>(1)</sup> Why then the growing popularity of these cults today?

As we have already said, a sociocultural phenomenon such as Blekete, does not admit of a monoclinical explanation. The answers must be found in the multiplicity of social problems that underlie the struggles for adaptation in the midst of the stresses and strains of a changing culture.

Since the days of Spieth, economic needs and opportunities have heightened geographical mobility. Wage labour and clerical employment have brought the Ewe-speaking people, including the Anloawo, in increasing contact with the world beyond the tribal frontiers. The volume of trade has increased. Onions from Anloga and jack or horse-mackerel from Keta are traded as far afield as Accra, Kumasi and Tamale. Thus the opportunities for brushing up against the cults of other lands, other tribal units and ascertaining their efficacy are increased. The osofo (priest) from Dzekulofe, we have noted above, first came into contact with Blekete while trading at/

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1. Of course, there are a few exceptions: Nyigbla, though foreign, rose to the highest position in the hierarchy of gods; but only because it was believed that Nyigbla was persuaded to move entirely from its original home at Gbugbla near Accra.

at Senyabereku. Seen in this light, Blekete is a product of money economy and its obligations. But let us look at it from another angle.

In another sense, the evolution of Blekete may imply an effort to cope with some of the social problems attendant on "social change". We have already examined in a general sense, lineage or family disorganizations as concomitants of a money economy. The demands of the European economy conflict with traditional obligations. Here we shall restrict ourselves to specific conflicts or social problems, in outline.

The Riot against Taxation: Some of the economic and social problems of this area were amply reflected in the riot of 1953 to which we have already made passing references. The cause of the riots was given by informants to be opposition, by segments of the population, to the payment of local rates and taxes.

The rebels included a large mob of illiterate villagers across the lagoon, the dissident population of Anloga and neighbouring villages along the littoral - mainly illiterate pagans. The scapegoats of their wrath were largely the minority of Christians and literates at Anloga who had espoused the cause of taxation as a means of self-help.<sup>(1)</sup> For a whole day, the rebels were in control, when all sorts of atrocities were perpetrated including murder, arson, looting of properties. That was the 17th/

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1. This was no tax collected for the benefit of central government; the revenues were collected and disbursed by local councils (authorities).

17th January, 1953. The next day the truncheons of the Colony Reserve Police Force restored order. The Peace Preservation Ordinance was invoked by the Governor and Anloga and a radius of ten miles were brought under a curfew which lasted weeks. Meanwhile, protagonists were rounded up, tried, and six of them hanged.

On Friday, 23rd January 1953, the "Graphic", a daily paper published in Ghana reported as follows:

"Now that fears of reprisals have been checked, people are coming forward at Anloga in large numbers to pay their local rates. The councils have opened paying centres in various parts of the town today. At one paying centre ... the amount collected before noon today was £50. Yesterday, £175 was paid in between noon and evening."

Physical force had helped to restore "normalcy", but what were the social consequences of the riot? The seeds of deep-seated enmity and rancour had been sown. An unnatural wedge has been driven between members of the same family and of the same community. Two rival associations have been formed, one largely pagan, the other largely Christian and literate. Members of the one do not subscribe to the funeral or the burial rites of the other. The antagonism inherent in these rival associations finds expression in political affiliation. The one supports the party of the government of the day; the other is in opposition. The authority of the natural rulers has decreased considerably in communities where such rival organizations/

organizations operate, especially where the chiefs are in alignment with the minority Christian-literate association.<sup>(1)</sup>

A detailed analysis of the riot is beyond present considerations. Here, we can only touch upon significant points more or less as a sideline. Personal animosities and economic frustrations may have played their part in fomenting the riot, but deep down the bottom of that battle-royal is the ever-presence of a conflict between the old and the new.

Anterior to the riot, a religious ceremony had been performed by which taxation was proscribed or declared taboo, the implication being that persons who paid their rates were subject to supernatural sanctions. The flouting of the taboo by Christians and literate members was believed to have touched off the riot. This explains the "vengeance" on Christians and the recrudescence of the riot in the form of rival associations on the basis of pagan-Christian religious affiliations.

The attempt to resurrect proscribed and defunct religious sanctions in a moment of emotional stress, under the anonymity of mob action, is expressive of the resentment generally felt by the pagan community against the proscription of indigenous observances, and possibly against the decreasing effectiveness of traditional forms of social control. Nyiko has been banned as an instrument of justice and social control; "trial by ordeal" no longer enjoys official recognition; nor does the custom of fiasidixexe.

1. At the time of field-study four years later, it seemed time had healed some of the breaches; but the major differences, crystallized by the rival associations, largely remained.

fiasidixexe.

As the indigenous religious institutions gradually fail or weaken in their traditional functions of personal and social adjustment, if Christianity does not fill the vacuum, one can expect the development or introduction of other religious forms. Herein lies the new meaning now attached to foreign cults such as Blekete. They fill a gap.

The Ghana-French Togoland Frontier: In the discourse of specific problems of contact peculiar to the Anloawo, we cannot overlook the artificial political barriers separating people of the same ethnic group such as obtain in this part of West Africa.

In 1899 an Anglo-German agreement placed the Krepi (Peki) and the Anlo under British rule, while virtually all the rest of the Ewe-speaking people came under German rule. As a result of the partitioning of German Togoland after the first World War the Ewe were further divided between the two mandated divisions of Togoland under British and French administration. At present, therefore, the Ewe people fall administratively into three groups, being more or less equally distributed in the Gold Coast and Togoland under British administration on the one hand and Togoland under French Administration on the other.<sup>(1)</sup>

The partitioning which had no regard to ethnic or linguistic/

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1. M. Manoukian, The Ewe-Speaking People, p.13. In 1956 a plebiscite under United Nations auspices united Togoland under British administration with the New Nation of Ghana.

linguistic considerations naturally separated kinsmen; in particular reference to Anlo, persons were cut off from their farms. In 1940, when France fell, the Vichy Government closed the frontier altogether. That was a great hardship for families living in both areas. The colonial government in the Gold Coast retorted by restricting the export of certain commodities across the Volta. The idea was to effect an economic boycott of French Togoland, but the Anloawo, and other Ewe-speaking people across the Volta, bore the full brunt of these economic sanctions.

Events such as these led to the development of an all-Ewe consciousness, a feeling of national solidarity which expressed itself in a number of petitions and delegations to the United Nations for the unification of the Ewe-speaking people. In spite of the recognition by the United Nations that "the problem has attained the force and dimensions of a nationalistic movement and a solution should be sought with urgency in the interest of peace and stability in that part of the world".<sup>(1)</sup> The French Togoland - Ghana Frontier remains to this day.<sup>(2)</sup>

Without/

1. Special Report of the first visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Togoland under British Administration and Togoland under French Administration on the Ewe problem, United Nations, 1950, p.38: quoted from Madeline Monoukian, op.cit., p.13.
2. On the 27th May, 1958, the Manchester Guardian carried the following article captioned - Tribes Divided by Frontier - Ghana-Togoland issue: "The Government of Ghana is to hold talks with the new Government of French Togoland on the removal of "irksome custom barriers" and on frontier tribal problems. This was announced yesterday by the Prime Minister, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who referred in particular to his concern over the splitting of the powerful Ewe tribe by the frontier... The question of the future of Togoland under French administration and the attitude of the Government of Ghana to it, is governed by the intensely human problem created by the artificial boundary dividing an area populated by the same indigenous tribal groups."



Without delving deep into the ramifications of the matter, enough has been said to imply the existence of a social problem - arising from the political rivalries of European powers. How then does this problem relate to Blekete or analogous cults?

There are no existing facts now to indicate a positive relationship between Blekete and frontier problems. Nevertheless, it is an inescapable truism that social problems of this kind make fertile ground for reaffirmation of old cults and the birth of analogous ones. This brings to mind the "Cargo Cults" of the Pacific<sup>(1)</sup> and the strongly nativistic cult of Mau Mauism<sup>(2)</sup> in Kenya.

Though Mau Mau is adjudged intensely nativistic and political in character, horrifying in its methods, there is no denying the fact that the cult evolved in response to social and economic problems created by the dominance of settlers over the native Kikuyu. Preferential treatment for settlers, the pressure on native landed holdings, restrictions in the freedom of movement by native subjects, the shortcomings of the "squatter" system all played their part in the evolution of that expensive cult. Whether the error of the Kikuyu in having recourse to the particular cult was one of judgment or intention, the fact remains/

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1. The movements have been called "cargo cults" because they usually include the notion that European goods will arrive as "cargo" from overseas in ships and aeroplanes, usually by spirit agency, for the benefit of the native people. See also discussions below.
  2. See L.S.B. Leakey, Mau Mau and Kikuyu, London, 1952; Defeating Mau Mau, London, 1954.

remains that the persons concerned were in quest of a solution to their social and economic problems. Leakey who has written two volumes on the Kikuyu cult sounds the following warning note: "Unless those in authority are prepared to recognize frankly that they made many mistakes, and unless they are prepared to spend considerable sums of money in the very near future in rectifying those errors,"<sup>(1)</sup> patterns of Mau Mau may easily develop in other parts of East Africa.

In New Guinea, we have functionally almost identical cults which, collectively, are popularly referred to as "Cargo Cults". They include the "Marching Rule" in the Solomons, the "Naked Cult" and the "John Frum" movement in parts of the New Hebrides. Professor Firth makes a general comment on the functional value of these cults as follows:

"These movements are part of a process of imperfect social and economic adjustment to conditions arising directly or indirectly from contact with the West. They are not mere passive responses, the blind stirrings of people who feel that they are being pushed around. Absurd as they may seem when considered as rational solutions, they are creative attempts of the people, to re-form their own institutions, to meet new demands or withstand new pressures. In the broadest sense their ends are to secure a fuller life."<sup>(2)</sup>

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1. Leakey, Defeating Mau Mau, p.127.
  2. Raymond Firth, "Social Changes in the Western Pacific", Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, Vol.101, No.4909, 1953.

The cults thus emphasize positive efforts on the part of a colonial people to solve problems created by the colonial structure. It is apparent, then, that there may be some specific correlation between some type of dissatisfaction, maladjustment or inadequate adjustment - economic, political or social - and the birth or resurgence of a "cargo cult". Indeed, detailed study of individual "cargo cults" suggests fluctuations with economic cycles. Take, for example, the John Frum movement of Tanna (New Hebrides).<sup>(1)</sup> The movement, according to Guiart, was heralded by dissatisfactions with Christian Missions and economic problems.<sup>(2)</sup> There was considerable bitterness against the Christian Missions who had neglected educational work because of what they held to be the mental inferiority of natives. It was further believed that Christian Missions had taught that Jesus would descend to lead the Christians to Heaven while the pagans of Tana were to be consumed in fire. But the first important signs of native unrest did not become apparent until the early 1940's when conditions were exacerbated by a fall in copra prices. Meetings were held to receive the message of one/

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1. Materials on this movement have been based principally on Jean Guiart's Un siecle et demi de contacts culturels a Tana: Nouvelles-Hebrides, pp.151-227; Peter Worsley, The Trumpet Shall Sound, pp.152-160. See also Jean Guiart, John Frum Movement in Tanna (1957), *Oceania*, Vol.22, pp.165-75. Culture Contact and John Frum Movement on Tanna, New Hebrides (1956), *South Western Journal of Anthropology*, Vol.12, No.1, pp.105-116.
  2. Jean Guiart, Un siecle et demi de contact culturel a Tana, Paris, 1956, p.223.

one, John Frum, described as a mysterious little man with bleached hair, high-pitched voice and clad in a coat with shining buttons.<sup>(1)</sup> The anticipated millenium included the coming of John Frum, a reign of bliss, rejuvenation, health, freedom from labour, expulsion of the whites, establishment of schools by John Frum to replace mission schools, etc.

Thus the gap between wants and the means of their satisfaction has resulted in the development of a cult: and a cult, according to Professor Malinowski is "a systematized series of operations to secure the means of satisfaction by non-technical methods".<sup>(2)</sup>

The purpose of this brief comparative study has been to highlight both the social and the psychological aspects of a modern cult such as Blekete. As a new social group, Blekete represents a type of African response to Western contact, re-integration succeeding relative disintegration. It cuts across tribal and lineage affiliations, much like the modern church that it strives to imitate as its ideal; in this regard, it compares favourably with the cargo cults and the so-called "witch-finding" cults of Africa.<sup>(3)</sup> But unlike the cargo cults, Blekete/

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1. Peter Worsley, The Trumpet Shall Sound, London, 1957, p.153.
  2. Raymond Firth, The Theory of Cargo Cults, Man, Vol.55 (1955), 142.
  3. See Barbara Ward's and Christensen's articles cited above. See also M.J. Field, Some New Shrines of the Gold Coast and their Significance, Africa, Vol.13 (1940), pp.138-149; Audrey Richards, A Modern Movement of Witch-Finders, Africa, Vol.8, pp.448-460.

Blekete is far from being nativistic; indeed, it seeks alignment with Christianity and aspires to prestige in terms of modern values. It is neither necessarily characteristic of a de-tribalized community or town. At the present stage, Blekete seems to thrive better in the villages. There are no known shrines or temples at Keta.

On the social/<sup>and</sup>psychological side of the scale, Blekete is as much an adjustment cult as the "cargo cults". But unlike the latter, it seeks adjustment more in terms of social needs than the economic and political needs so markedly characteristic of the "cargo cults". This may be due to differences in ecological background.

In the previous chapter, the adaptation or adjustment described was largely a reinterpretation or modification of the old ritual; there has been little change in the structure of the cult group. In the present chapter we have described an entirely new cult group, partly based on previously existing practices, but also an example of the modern type association. This represents a further stage in the process of adaptation.

In both the last chapter and the present one we have indicated:

(i) That the impinging forces have produced effects of a relatively disorganizing kind on the indigenous religious system.

(ii) That readjustments in the form of modified traditional cults (i.e. ritual modification) and new 'atike' cults/

cults are taking shape.

(iii) That structurally the new cults seem to be developing towards the associational type of organization.

So much for the indigenous type of groupings. In the next chapter we shall pursue contemporary Christian religious groupings.



## CHAPTER X

### CHRISTIANITY IN ITS LOCAL CONTEXT

In an earlier chapter (vide Chapter VI), we surveyed the various Christian sects or denominations - orthodox and unorthodox - their history, organization and function in the community. The first Christian church in Anlo was established more than a century ago. The other principal Mission Churches have long since marked their Golden Jubilee anniversaries. The Christian population in 1957, excluding the membership of Apostolic Independent churches was over 53,000. In the field of education, the church has performed yeoman service. Today, even though the local councils have entered the educational field rather militantly, the mission churches still maintain at least 73% of the schools in the state. In a village, most of the educating social activities centre on the church and the mission school. All in all, it seems that the Church in Anlo has been one of the great forces from the outside world to influence life and thought in the modern world.

Christians have certainly benefitted immensely from Christian education and influence. But to what extent does the African Christian harmonise the Christian teachings with his traditional background, upbringing and nurture? Christianity, as presented by the missionaries, is a direct antithesis to the African's culture. The orthodox missionary expects the would-be/

would-be Christian to make a full and complete break with his African past in order to qualify as a sincere Christian. To what extent do Christians achieve this break with the past? This is the major problem of this chapter. It is the problem of Christian adjustment within the indigenous environmental context. In this connection, we have been partially forestalled by the two preceding chapters which highlighted some of the conflicts of the Christian.

In this chapter, we shall discuss the two major categories of Christian church organization, the orthodox and revivalist independent churches, with special reference to their relationship to the indigenous religion and culture.

(1)

Orthodox Mission Churches in Relation  
to Indigenous Beliefs

'Does the African ever have a complete break with his past?' is a question asked by Dr. Edwin Smith. He answered his own question when he states, 'It is not to be expected that they have or can make a complete break with the past, however much they profess to do so.'

Professor Forde strikes a similar note when he comments on the attitudes and underlying beliefs which Africans bring with them when they come under the influence of Western institutions. He states: "The boy or girl going to a mission school, the youth who progresses to a college, the migrant labourer on farm or mine, the man who receives technical training in agriculture or forestry, the store clerk and the lawyer - all these, as/

as well as their far more numerous fellows who have remained in their villages, bring to their manipulation of Western tools and Practice of Western routines a background of ideas inculcated in childhood through their tribal culture."<sup>(1)</sup>

From the pronouncements of these eminent Africanists it seems that, at best, the African in the contact situation lives between the two worlds. He achieves social integration by adaptation to the old and the new. If, as we have remarked, Christianity is the antithesis of the African culture, the Christian is bound to encounter, or suffer conflicts with the church or with himself. But let us proceed inductively by examining some of the doctrines of the church and the reactions of Christians.

The following rules which are fully representative of Church discipline in the Orthodox Churches have been culled from the Bye-Laws of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, as published in 1933. They are my translations from the Ewe original:

(i) The candidate for baptism as well as the baptised member of the church shall refrain from all associations with pagans in pagan customary rites, festivals, burial rites, drumming and dancing and related pagan practices.<sup>(2)</sup>

(ii) All outward manifestations such as the use of charms (dzokawo)/

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1. Forde, "Introduction", African Worlds, London, 1954, p.xvii
  2. Ewe-Kristo si woyona be Ewe-Presbyteria-Hame la fe Hamedodo (Bye-Laws of the E.P. Church) 1933, Section 29, par.2.

(dzokawo), facial cicatrice (blunui) and related symbols are pagan observances.

Similarly, belief in, or acknowledgment of all kinds of superstitions such as witchcraft, divination (afakaka), prophylactic non-therapeutic medicine, trial by ordeal, necromancy, listening to the sound of birds and animals (with intent to drawing mystic inferences), the observance of pagan holidays, and related practices and attitudes are definitely pagan and anti-Christian (vide Section 29, par.3).

(iii) If a pagan polygynist wishes to join the Christian faith, he shall relinquish all but one of his wives before undertaking instructions as a candidate for baptism (vide Section 31, par.1).

(iv) All pagan observances in death and burial are denounced by the church. It is highly reprehensible, therefore, for a Christian to stow or lodge articles or money in the coffin of the deceased. Christians shall similarly renounce the practice of separate burial of relics (nails, hair etc.) such as pagans commonly do (vide Section 45, par.4).

(v) Plurality of wives (polygyny) is forbidden in the church. The offender shall be withdrawn from recognised membership of the church. If the additional wife is a Christian, she too shall suffer similar penalty (vide Section 46, par.12).

(vi) Persons under penalty of suspension from recognised membership of the church lose their status as communicants (i.e. partakers of the Holy Communion); besides, they have no voice in/

in the election of presbyters; they cannot serve as sponsors for candidates in baptism and nuptial ceremonies; neither can they seek the blessings of the church for a monogamous marriage contracted outside the church<sup>(1)</sup> (vide Section 71, par.1).

These prohibitions, few as they are, cover a very wide range of beliefs and practices of African cultures.<sup>(2)</sup> They include religious beliefs and African world view, recreation and amusement, marriage and the family. Obviously, they transcend purely pagan religious concepts and practice; they include morality and customary observances which have no necessary connection with religion. The logical inference is that the Christian proselyte shall have denounced not only his former religious beliefs and practices, but also the morals and the customs of his society, whether or not these are forbidden by the scriptures or the teaching of Christ. How does the convert adjust to these new obligations while yet remaining in his African environment?

It is possible that the Christian system of proselytism through the medium of formal education has helped some of the younger generation to adapt more readily to the Christian way of life. Take, for example, the child of Christian parents, or one/

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1. In principle, all Christians are expected to marry within the church; in practice, native customary marriages are contracted and later sanctioned by the church, in a 'blessing ritual'.
  2. It has not been found necessary to include such conventional doctrines as the Trinity, monotheism, the concept of salvation, etc., which are binding anyway.

one baptised in infancy and brought to a mission school at a tender age. At this impressionable age, the teachings of the missionaries, needless to say, leave a life-long impression. There are quite a few Christians who have experienced the protective canopy of the missions in this manner and have thoroughly imbibed Christian ideals to the large exclusion of the African culture into which they were born. Unless they have been soured by specific Christian conflicts in later life, they remain largely Christian, heart and soul, in spite of a pagan community.

With reservations, we might have almost identical expectations from an exclusive Christian community, such as was encouraged, directly or indirectly, by the early missionaries.<sup>(1)</sup> But the large majority of adult Christians are persons who have been born and bred in the same community with pagans. As members of their indigenous groups, Christians share in family life, as it is defined by their society; they share the reciprocal obligations of their groups; as members of their groups they take part in their economic activities; they share their knowledge and experience; they share in their sentiments, their drives, their fears; they share in their song and language and art and dance.<sup>(2)</sup> It is against this background of/

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1. See also Gunter Wagner, "The Changing family Among the Bantu Kavironds", Supplement to Africa, Vol.XII, No.1.
  2. Busia, "Ancestor Worship, Libation, Stools, Festival", Christianity and African Culture, p.23.



of participation in a common culture and common social groupings that the attitude of the Christian minority to church discipline must be studied.

We have already cited in the preceding chapters the Christian's reaction to church discipline. Here it will be our task to synthesize and to offer explanations. We shall dwell on the major prohibitions outlined above.

(i) Burial and mourning rites: In theory, Christians should not stow or lodge articles including money with the deceased; it is pagan practice. In practice, most Christians do. In certain cases, Christians who feel that they have been sufficiently emancipated from pagan "superstitions" merely substitute other articles for the customary ones of 'cloth' and money. Such substitutes may include the Bible, hymn book, Christian identity cards, such as baptismal, confirmation or communion attendance certificates. For the literate, a favourite novel may be included.

There was a time when the church enforced compliance with discipline by delegating presbyters to supervise the home ritual antecedent to church burial. I am informed that the practice has long since lapsed into abeyance, partly on account of the inconvenience caused presbyters on such police duties, and partly on account of the unwilling co-operation of lineages who decry the practice as needless interference.

"Coffin-enclosure" of any kind, as we have already hinted, derives from the traditional world view. The money is/

is intended for a fare across a "Styx" over which the spirit of the deceased must be ferried on its way to the spirit world, and the abode of the ancestors. The 'cloth' serves partly as an act of severance of ties with the spirit of the deceased, and partly as furnishing the deceased with material needs in the spirit world. It is evident, then, that the Christian who makes "coffin enclosure" subscribes to this world view which runs counter to Christian dogma.

In theory, mourning rites are pagan and unchristian; in practice, Christians follow an adapted version of the same ritual. In respect of a widow, the pagan rites of widowhood include the initiation of mourning at the seashore (or near some running water) followed by a cleansing ritual some sixteen months later. (1)

In the Protestant churches, the initiation of mourning and the cleansing ritual are conducted in the chapel under the supervision of the local pastor and or presbyters. In both cases, it takes the form of an early morning private service for the widow, her kinsmen and close friends. Hymns are sung and prayers offered. The pastor or presbyter-in-charge offers admonition in a brief sermon. As the climax of the programme lady-presbyters (hamedadawo) escort the widow to the vestry or sacristy where she is clad in the weeds or made to shed them, according as to whether the occasion is one of initiation into widowhood/

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1. See Chapter 5 (6)

widowhood or the termination of the period. Some of the churches observe only the "weed-off" or termination of mourning. The whole programme may last between 20 and 30 minutes. (1)

When I examined my pastor informants on the validity of the ritual, from the Christian standpoint, I gained the impression that the churches had merely yielded to the pressures of the Christian flock. The ritual is basically pagan, as some of my informants concede, but, it has been shorn of its pagan elements and sanctified. By so doing, the church has brought the ritual under supervision, rather than allow Christians to pursue it their own way.

This offers a major instance in which the church has come to grips with reality. It has realised the futility of enforcing a sanction which carries no weight with adherents. By rallying to the point of view of members, the church saved face.

Like the burial ritual, mourning rites derive from the Anlo-traditional world view - the idea that the spirit world largely corresponds with the world of reality. As the ritual reintegrates or restores the widow to her place in society, so does it rehabilitate the deceased in the spirit world. Negligence of the ritual is believed to be fraught with disaster. It is my contention that this traditional world view is not entirely displaced by the Christian doctrine of a heaven, a paradise, /

1. The private service in "weed-off" is distinct from the public one which may form a part of the regular Sunday service. This may be characterized by elaborately printed announcements, the attendance of service in uniform by members of family, refreshment after service, etc.

paradise, when the African is converted.

(ii) Pagan festivals and holidays: In theory, Christians should not subscribe to pagan events; in practice, most do. At Dzelukofe, fishing is taboo on Wednesday because the day is sacred to Awleketi, the Yewe maritime tro. Both pagan and Christian fishermen observe the taboo. We have also referred to the incident of Christian fishermen at Woe making monetary subscription towards the local fishing ritual, and the objections of the local pastor. From the explanations offered by the pagan fishermen, subscription to the ritual was seen more in terms of social obligations of an economic group than personal, individual responsibility. The unpleasant social and economic consequences for a minority of Christians disassociating themselves from collective responsibility, on account of religious affiliations, may be readily imagined. Christians participate in stool ritual. Closely connected, as it is, with ancestral worship the ritual is pagan. But the event is also a social occasion when members of the stool, far and near, re-unite. For a Christian member to boycott the event on grounds of religious convictions is to sever relations with his kin, and, not least, to be lacking in deference to the ruling chief.

Here again, a basically pagan ritual is seen in a wider context of social relations and lineage obligations. Christian status is not held to mar or impair one's membership of the lineage; hence it is no bar to the fulfilment of one's social obligations/

obligations to this unit (lineage).

The naming of babies of Christian parents on the eighth day, usually entails a family gathering of Christians and pagans. On the one hand, libation of gin and or water is offered, presumably, to the ancestors. On the other, hymns and prayers mark the event and give the occasion a touch of Christian festivity. Here, we have a basically pagan festival which has been partially clothed in Christian habiliments. The "syncretism" marks the social influence of the wider community on the life and practice of the Christian.

(iii) Charms and non-therapeutic medicines: In theory, no Christians must use charms or non-therapeutic medicine because they smack of paganism. In practice, quite a few Christians, directly or indirectly, do make use of these. Dr. Parrinder gives his personal experience of Christian associations with "magical charms" in Ibadan City as follows: "We have often seen children of Christians wearing cowrie belts to prevent teething trouble; others wearing leather amulets on ankles and around the neck, or metal bracelets, or anklets that rattle to keep away evil spirits. Particularly are these worn by the 'born-to-die' children. These are thought to be other babies that have died, of the same mother, and the charms are to prevent the new child dying. The metal objects are bought from a blacksmith or in the market, and taken to a pagan 'doctor', who puts them in some preparation, such as snail juice, for several days; then he gives it back and says the child will/

will not die".<sup>(1)</sup> These are familiar patterns all over West Africa. Children who are less adequately clad reveal the associations more overtly than the adults to whose beliefs the use of the charms must be traced.

In Anlo, some of the most popular charms resorted to by the Christian include fuke and vidzike. These are pregnancy and baby charms respectively. The former is intended to aid the pregnant woman survive the natural discomforts of pregnancy, as well as annul all evil designs directed to her person; the latter (vidzike) serves as protection for the child; it wards off evil influences, including the fatal disease of witchcraft. The charm itself may assume the form of a straw-like string which may be secured around the waist or wrist. This may be procured, even after birth in a hospital.

In twin-births and reincarnations, recourse to charms becomes more imperative, because such events are held to be out of the ordinary. Christian parents may resort to the appropriate protective devices in order to secure the life of their child.

It must be emphasized, however, that some Christians who resort to charms do so from honest intentions. These do not feel obliged to obtain their protective devices through the medium of pagan ritual specialists. To them, tradition has bequeathed the knowledge that certain objects in nature are loaded with specific dynamism or supernatural power. Their responsibility is merely to take full advantage of this knowledge, which they/

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1. Parrinder, Religion in an African City, London, 1953, pp.159-160.



they do with equanimity. The following case-history illustrates the point:

An elderly illiterate presbyter, a leading member of the community, was commenting as an informant on the validity of the doctrine of reincarnation. He referred to his four-year old grandson, who, as a baby, often cried through the night even though medical examinations had revealed that he suffered no physical pain. Then the idea dawned on him that his grandson must have been a reincarnated forbear. He knew of the special bead strung up and worn as a bracelet in such circumstances. He procured the bear (gblotsui) - without recourse to medicine-men - and made a bracelet out of it for the boy. It was entirely efficacious! The boy never cried again at night without cause.

We have in this case-history, the traditional concept of reincarnation with the associated "magical" ritual preserved by this presbyter, although the protective "magical" ritual is no longer performed through the traditional channels. A pagan would ordinarily take the child to a diviner who would ascertain the cause of the nocturnal cries. Then he might come out with the divination that the child was a reincarnated forbear, and proceed to offer the appropriate (bead) "magical" charm.<sup>(1)</sup>

One other general theoretical observation in regard to/

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1. In the more overt evidences of reincarnation, bodily marks on babies may be traced to deceased kinsmen. Even among sophisticated Christian parents, such bodily symbols lead to the naming of the child after the deceased kinsman, or the adoption of a patronymic, as an act of recognition of a reincarnated forbear.

to Christian behaviour in relation to charms is pertinent. Christians are afraid of ghosts, witches and related spirits, though theoretically they are believed emancipated from such "superstitions" or irrational feelings. Christians are fully cognizant of the feelings and attitudes of fellow-Christians, as pastors are of their membership, but the reality of the so-called "superstition" is never acknowledged by the church. With reference to "magical" charms, it is more realistic to own that on conversion the Christian largely relinquishes manipulation of charms for destructive ends, though he maintains belief in their efficacy. His Christian status elevates him above the 'base practice' but it does not dislodge the beliefs which crystallize the practice. Not unnaturally the belief generates a feeling of vulnerability and insecurity. Like an unarmed soldier in enemy territory, the Christian feels defenceless. His inability to repel attack makes him the more vulnerable, and increases his insecurity and anxiety. This leads the Christian to procure what he might consider, a passive protective device.

A Christian friend of mine once procured from the market a paste in the form of shea-butter mixed with a processed herb said to be protection against witchcraft. It was to be used like a vapour-rub. In the conversation that followed, I realised that he felt persecuted by friends and kinsmen through the agency of evil spirits. Here is a very gentle Christian, and/

and as far as his habits may be judged by personal acquaintance, a conscientious Christian; none-the-less, he feels insecure and must resort to protective or prophylactic remedies to regain a state of balance. I am convinced that this is the predicament of most well-meaning Christians who have to do with charms. Evidently, insecurity stems from the traditional beliefs obtaining in the wider community of which the Christian is but a minor part.

Thus far, we have dealt with church discipline as it affects customs with specific religious content. We shall now examine customs of moral or purely cultural interest.

(iv) Drumming and dancing: According to the Bye-Laws of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (vide Section 29, par.2) both the Christian and the prospective Christian should not consort with pagans in drumming and dancing. This at once excluded Presbyterians from participation. They were not expected to be on-lookers at pagan drum exhibitions, nor could they organize their own parties. The extreme rigidity of this discipline became apparent in later years when sister churches began to adopt relatively conciliatory attitude.

At Ho, in an interview with the Synod Clerk of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church for the Trans-Volta Territory, I learnt that in 1956, 23 years after the promulgation of the church law against drumming and dancing, a committee was formed to examine meticulously, the morals of 'native drumming and dancing'. The findings of the committee were that drumming or/

or dancing per se, was not immoral or unchristian; it was the association, in certain cases, with objectionable songs and typical pagan observances that were unchristian. Subsequently, the Synod adopted a resolution to the effect that the law should be partially rescinded when the church might experiment in indigenous drumming and dancing in select Middle Schools. After a period, not specified, the situation would be reviewed.

The attitude of the Roman Catholic and A.M.E. Zion Churches in the matter seems to be that the church is not opposed to the art as such; but if they are done as an expression of "fetish worship", or are immoral, inciting to sexual misbehaviour, abusive or insulting to others, the church opposes them on account of the "superstition" and the immorality that they express, advocate or propagate.

While this expresses a measure of conciliation, there is implicit restriction: The Catholic or Zionite cannot lawfully witness a drum exhibition by, say, the Yewe cult, since Yewe is "fetish". This, theoretically, excludes Christians from watching a large variety of indigenous drumming and dancing exhibitions. In practice, however, all the churches are aware that most of their adherents are keen, enthusiastic spectators of indigenous drumming and dancing of all types. During the Ghana Independence celebrations, Yewe performed dance exhibitions on both local and national levels. In each case, the performance drew a massive crowd including Christians and educated observers. The/

The varieties of Yewe dances are artistically executed and show a very high degree of beauty, originality and creativity - a real source of aesthetic enjoyment. (1)

(v) Monogamy - Polygyny: None of the orthodox churches countenance polygyny. It is considered a great stumbling block to full and real Christianity. The prospective Christian, if a polygynist, must put away all his wives but one. (2) The Christian offender is officially ex-communicated or withdrawn from recognised membership of the church until the 'anomaly' is rectified. In practice, more than 50% of the adult adherents of the churches are polygynists. The implication is that a large number of male Christians are but "nominal" members of the church, or members without status. It is regrettable that direct statistical evidence is not available from the churches to emphasize the point, but the disparity between church membership and communicant membership is revealing. Excluding child membership, practically all of the non-communicant membership is made up of polygynists. The following statistics illustrate the point:

	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Communicants</u>	<u>% of Communicants</u>
E. Presbyterian Church	10,949	2,380	22
Roman Catholic ...	36,379	7,583	20
A.M.E. Zion ...	6,000	1,000	17
Orthodox/			

1. The variety of Yewe drumming and dancing include the following:  
 (i) Husago (ii) Sowu (iii) Sogba (iv) Adawu (v) Afowu  
 (vi) Awlewu (vii) Vodudawu (viii) Agbowu (ix) Adelawu  
 (x) Tsinawu (xi) Madidigaga (xii) Gade (xiii) Asinana-Mawu  
 (xiv) Agbikor (xv) Adeki (xvi) Ako.
2. Vide Presbyteria Hamedodo (Church Discipline), Section 31, par.1.

Orthodox mission church intransigence on monogamy follows a clear pattern all over Africa. It is significant that the African delegates to the World Conference of the International Missionary Council at Madras in 1938 raised the question as to whether monogamy was essential to Christianity or was merely a factor of Western civilization.<sup>(1)</sup> Rightly or wrongly, monogamy was upheld as vital to the church in Africa. In his portion of the composite work on the Survey of African Marriage and Family Life, Rev. Lyndon Harris portrays a dour future for Christian polygynists when he states, in his preamble, that it cannot be expected that the survey will provide either a critique of Christian matrimony or such an estimate of polygyny as will revise the almost unanimous practice of Christian missions since their inception in Africa; it is a vain hope to think that there may be in the system of polygyny some saving clause to be discovered from the Survey that will make its practice generally permissible to African Christians.<sup>(2)</sup>

This uncompromising stand is amply expressed by the local orthodox churches. Polygynists are rigidly excluded from communion and full membership of the church. In the case of teachers of mission schools, extra sanctions apply: they lose their jobs. Needless to say, such measures exacerbate ill-feeling./

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1. Phillips (ed.), Survey of African Marriage and Family Life, London, 1953.
  2. Ibid.



ill-feeling.<sup>(1)</sup>

Like the other prohibited institutions we have been discussing polygyny in the church is an expression of the hold of the indigenous social situation and in which the church seeks to thrive. The Christian does not cease to become a part of that social situation. He continues to form a part of the social situation and believe in the tenets of the culture, in spite of a change in his religious allegiance. Prestige in the plurality of wives, the taboo on marital intercourse while a wife is suckling her child, are as meaningful to the Christian as they are to the pagan.

In this section, we have examined some of the intentions of the orthodox churches on the one hand, and the response of the African adherents, on the other. There is an admitted gap between theory and practice, church doctrine and membership conformity. While the members unwittingly strive to give the church an Africo-Christian expression, church doctrine resolutely resists this local expression. Whereas missionaries demand conformity with standards comparable to the ideal of Europe and America, in practice, local adaptations have been gradually creeping into the church. Whether or not adaptations and local expressions are acknowledged, the fact cannot be gainsaid that orthodox churches in Anlo are not immaculate expressions of conventional/

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1. In recent years when more secular schools (Local Authority) are being established, such disciplinary measures are losing their efficacy. It is no problem for a trained teacher who has been suspended or dismissed from a mission school to find teaching employment elsewhere. He may be readily taken on by one of the secular schools in dire need of trained teachers.

conventional European churches. Like the purely indigenous cult within the modern framework, orthodox Christianity reveals composite features that are neither purely African nor purely European. This is in conformity with the theory of "social change" as earlier enunciated. (1)

The importance attached to this section of the chapter, however, transcends the problem of deviation or conformity to established Christian dogma or practice. What has been relevant is the question of indigenous religious habits and customs finding expression in Christianity, even though much of this has been disavowed by the church as an aberration. The influence of tradition is very much alive and keenly felt by Christians. Thus, willy nilly, the indigenous religion is finding new expressions by means of a "symbiotic" association with Christianity. If this kind of association fails to achieve the expected adaptation, it is inevitable that successive and ancillary institutions will keep developing until the desired integration is attained. This leads us to a discussion of the Apostolic Independent Churches that thrive side by side with the orthodox Christian churches.

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#### Indigenous Beliefs in Relation to Independent Churches

By 'independent churches', we refer to the varieties of Apostolic Churches with inspiration from America and also those/

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1. See Chapter (VIII) (introductory portion).

those of purely local character which are clearly distinguishable from the orthodox missionary churches. These include the Faith Tabernacle, the First Century Gospel, The Christ Apostolic, the Gold Coast (now Ghana) Apostolic Church, the Pentecostal Grace Assembly, the Christian Assembly, the Apostolic Revelation Society and other 'household' churches of Christian character.<sup>(1)</sup>

As separatist or independent churches with "syncretic" features, they form a part of the separatist church movement all over Africa to the study of which various scholars have made notable contributions. Of special importance are the contributions of Dr. Bengt Sundkler in South Africa and Dr. Parrinder in Nigeria. In his Bantu Prophets of South Africa, Sundkler distinguishes two main groups of separatist churches in South Africa; the 'Ethopian' type and the 'Zionist' type. The former has reference to secessionists from white churches. The latter, believed inspired from Zion City, Illinois (U.S.A.), are of an apocalyptic revivalist character.<sup>(2)</sup> Dr. Parrinder, on the other hand, distinguishes/

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1. See Chapter VII (1) (c.b. & e) for a brief historical background of these churches. None of these belongs to the Ghana Christian Council of Churches.
  2. This appears to be the conventional classification of separatist churches in the racially conscious areas of East and South Africa. See also George Shepperson, Ethiopianism and African Nationalism, Phylon, Vol. XIV (1953) No.1 pp.9-18; M. Banton, An Independent African Church in Sierre Leone, The Hibbert Journal, Vol. LV October (1956) pp.57-63.

distinguishes three categories in Nigeria: the 'orthodox' in doctrine, the 'prayer healing' type and those that mingle other beliefs in a "syncretic" manner.

As in the rest of Ghana, the independent church movement in Anlo did not arise from the racial problems characteristic of South and East Africa. Consequently, Dr. Sundkler's distinction is not very helpful: in general, however, practically all the churches seem to conform to the 'Zionist' designation. Dr. Parrinder's classification is not wholly applicable either since there are no independent churches strictly 'orthodox' in doctrine. It is better to think of the Anlo independent churches collectively as both 'prayer-healing' and 'syncretic'.

With the exception of the Apostolic Revelation Society which applies medicine, as an adjunct to faith and prayer in the healing process, all the independent churches seem to eschew native and foreign medicines, as well as recourse to hospitals, dispensaries and clinics. Prayer is believed adequate to cure all diseases.<sup>(1)</sup> Secondly, the churches are "syncretic" in the sense that there is a certain acknowledged fusion of Christianity with aspects of the indigenous culture. It is the latter feature that is of supreme importance in the present study. We shall begin by reviewing some of the major features of the churches.

All the churches are of the apocalyptic, revivalist type, /

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1. In practice, however, there are some minor diversions to medicine.

type, placing a great deal of emphasis on the literal interpretation of the Bible, faith and prayer. The organization of the church is largely in imitation of the orthodox patterns, although some variations are clearly discernible. Dreams and visions endow members with extra-sensory perception. Faith-healing ascribes to disease a strong religious connection. Purifactory rites and taboos feature in the healing process. Membership of the church is preponderantly female, and both men and women have tales of a special conviction or religious experience impelling membership. The prophet, the pastor, the leader or founder of a church is not without a divine 'call'. Church services, in which the congregation markedly participates, are punctuated with ecstatic fits, 'speaking with tongues', song and dance. Both polygyny and monogamy are emphasized.

Some of these practices are undoubtedly the expressions of indigenous notions and beliefs. We shall analyse some of these.

(a) The Prophet's 'call': The various Apostolic Churches have seceded from parent organizations on account of various dissatisfactions, including predominantly the desire for independence and an opportunity to give the church a local colour. Of course, rivalry, personal ambition, prestige have also played their part. But side by side with these factors is the claim to a 'call', a divine inspiration impelling the would-be founder to establish a church which shall serve as a revival of Christianity in the community. Usually, the adult 'call' is preceded by signs and/

and visions in infancy, pointers to prophetic inspiration in later life. In this connection, the life of the Prophet-founder of the Apostolic Revelation Society offers an illuminating example.

In his vernacular booklet on the establishment of the Apostolic Revelation Society, the Prophet-founder gives a brief autobiographical sketch which highlights the inspiration leading him to establish his church.<sup>(1)</sup> According to the prophet, his parents and those who were acquainted with his infancy testified that even as a child he was fond of prophesying and making signs and wonders. As he grew up, visions often appeared to him, although he was still too young to understand and value their merits. Not until he had grown into a youth, and began to earn a living as a prison official (warder) away from home (at Akuse) did he begin to understand his mission. At Akuse, he often prayed and sang hymns aloud. As he sang, his tears were unrestrained, for the words of his songs conveyed such doleful meaning. His only recourse was prayer and prayer brought him peace and solace.

The inmates of his house often wondered at this peculiar behaviour and felt strongly that there was something wrong with him. When he assured the landlady that there was nothing the matter with him, she warned him to put an end to his nocturnal practice of praying and singing aloud when others were steeped/

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1. The information in this booklet has been supplemented by personal interview with the prophet and senior pastors.



steeped in sleep. He politely acquiesced, but this proved the turning point in his life. A spirit surging within him led him out, this time, not merely to pray and sing to himself, but to preach the word of God up and down the whole town and in the adjoining villages and settlements. His whole behaviour was inexplicable to himself. He did not seem to enjoy what he was doing, nevertheless he felt impelled to do it. At the end of each day's preaching, he felt like one returning to consciousness from a dream in which he had taken a long voyage to an unknown destination. That was in 1934.

The rest of Prophet Wovenu's life-history antecedent to the establishment of his church told of how he relinquished his appointment at Akuse only to become a diamond miner at Asuboni, a settlement near Akwatia. It was a tough job, for at the close of each day's activity, his hands were covered with blisters. What was more, he was alone among a group of migrant workers from Northern Ghana, who were none too friendly. In the midst of his difficulties, he was suddenly uplifted by God. First, he was transferred to a relatively simple job, on the same wages as the miners doing the more difficult task. Then his Scottish boss, a MacSmith, realising that he was literate, made him an overseer over the miners. That was in August, 1935. But this was not the end of God's support, for he was soon transferred to headquarters as a full clerical employee. Prophet Wovenu ascribed each and every one of these promotions to divine intervention.

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This last promotion brought him to town and he began his evangelistic career once more. He preached widely, organized a choir and a class of catechumens whom he taught the rudiments of Christianity. Then, late in 1939, the outbreak of the second world war was announced and he left akwatia in October, 1939. He felt at this time that he had accomplished the apprenticeship through which he was to become God's prophet. Back to his home-town at Tadzewu, he proclaimed himself and began his prophetic career on the 2nd November, 1939.

Presumably, much of this notion of prophetic preparation for one's task, childhood visions, prayers and songs and tears derives from the Old Testament and the Jewish conception of divine priesthood. But these manifestations also have their indigenous counterparts. The idea that the divine spokesman must be supernaturally elected and that evidence of such selection must be manifest in 'peculiar' mannerisms is an acknowledged feature of selection for the indigenous priesthood. The woman with a pot of water on her head is suddenly seized and possessed by the god who wants her to establish his cult and serve as his spokesman (tronua); she dances and sings frantically or is mute in tears until the confirmatory divination, and the preliminary rites antecedent to the new status have been gone through. The object, naturally, is to inspire confidence in the spokesman or tronua and reverence for the deity concerned.

It is likely that Wovenu's pre-prophetic career may have made a profound impression on his predominantly pagan audience/

audience at Tadzewu who would be quick to grasp the import of the divine inspiration to which the Prophet lays claim. Indeed, eighteen years after the promulgation of his prophetic mission, he claims at least 75% of the Tadzewu population as adherents of his church, which is quite a phenomenal achievement in a hinterland village.<sup>(1)</sup> Prior to the advent of the Prophet, the Roman Catholic Church had earlier attempted the establishment of Church and School in the community, but abandoned the enterprise on account of the pathetic indifference of the village folk. The success of the Prophet in church and school in the same community must be attributed to his ability to speak to the people in the cult language, the language of the divine ritual specialist. In practical terms, the church (A.R.S.) might disavow such a medium of contact but the effect of such a medium would be felt more by the recipients than the donors. We shall discuss other relevant factors.

(b) Prayer-healing: Closely connected with the prophetic appeal is prayer-healing. As we have already stated, most of the Apostolic churches eschew medicine - indigenous and foreign - as well as modern hospitals and dispensaries. Prayer is believed adequate to cope with all kinds of sickness. Similarly, the influence of malevolent spirits may be allayed by semi-"magical" methods. These may entail the offering of prayers, the observance of taboos such as fasting; in the more "magical" cases, water may/

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1. In 1939, according to the information of the Prophet, there were only two Christians - a storekeeper and his sister - out of a population of about 200 at Tadzewu. By 1954, the population had risen to about 900.

be blessed and offered to the victim for purposes of ablution or drinking. In the event witnessed at Keta-Dzelukofe, a bottle of florida water was sanctified by reading psalms over it. Two leaders performed the ritual, both reading the psalms concurrently, the opened bottle firmly clasped in their hands. A few drops of the florida water was to form part of the regular morning bath for the invalid concerned.

For the Apostolic Revelation Society which makes use of medicine, the medicine serves essentially as a minor adjunct to the major factors of faith and prayer. At Tadzewu, the chapel forms an important part of the Society's cottage for the sick.

The emphasis on faith and prayer in the healing process may derive from the presumed connection between sickness and religion, sickness being the result of one's sin; in such circumstances it is only or largely divine intervention that may restore health, hence the atonement by prayer. This concept derives from the Bible, but here, again, it also expresses the Ewe's general concept of disease or sickness, particularly gbogbomedo or sickness of supernatural causation which we have already discussed at length. The use of holy water and the expulsion of evil spirits also have both Biblical and indigenous support.

Thus, when the Apostolic Pastor cures a pagan by means of prayer or offers semi-magical remedies, he is talking to him in his own cult "language". As the founder of the Pentecostal Grace Assembly put it, 'pagans want signs, the kind of/

of signs they are used to in their own pagan cults. They want miracles, instantaneous recovery from sickness.' Stories of such miraculous healing gain wide currency in Anlo. Usually, they follow a pattern like this: A sick pagan has tried all the available remedies, material and spiritual, but fails to regain his health. Now at the verge of death, there is news of a faith-healer who is invited to the patient's bedside. He prays earnestly for the patient, and, as the story goes, the person with one foot in the grave rises and feeds from the hands of the pastor. The household is stupefied and a mass conversion takes place. The Pastor of the Pentecostal Grace Assembly claims to have restored lunatics to sanity and life to two or more persons almost entirely dead. Others claim cures for barrenness or sterility.

(c) 'Speaking with tongues' and extra-sensory perception:

These are also familiar features of the Apostolic Churches observable at churches and revival meetings. 'Speaking with tongues' involves utterances or expressions which may be interpreted by a special functionary. To the layman, the expressions sound more or less meaningless, inarticulate ejaculations. The interpretations may convey prophetic meaning. 'speaking with tongues' is closely allied to dreams and dream-interpretation which is also a part of the Apostolic armoury of belief and practice. In the better organized churches there may be a special functionary, the seer, whose duty it is to make revelations and interpret dreams. But in a more general sense every/

every member is a seer by his or her own right, possessed of a second sight by which he or she is fitted to pry into the thoughts of fellow-members and detect infidelities such as the practice of witchcraft, or "bad magic", the non-observance of taboos related to drinks, tobacco and fasting (on Fridays).

While these practices may derive their authority from both the Old and New Testaments, we cannot help finding in them parallels with pagan divination and 'possession'. The diviner - man or woman - is a ritual specialist divinely endowed with power to unravel mysteries. He may make predictions, interpret sickness, detect witchcraft or the influence of malevolent spirits, and offer remedies. 'Possession' by a god, akin to 'speaking with tongues' is also a familiar feature of most pagan cults. The 'possessed' is not responsible for what he does or says, even though he transmits divine message, much in the same manner that the 'speaker with tongues' must be interpreted. In another sense, the 'speaker with tongues' is fairly comparable with the fiele or medium who serves as the intermediary between a tro or deity and his tro-priest.

(d) Free expression in participant ritual: Vivacity, free expression and emotional release strongly characterize the independent churches of Anlo, as of other parts of Africa. At service prayers may be said aloud, sermons punctuated with songs, hallelujah - both from the preacher and the congregation - and 'speaking with tongues'. Church music is enhanced by percussion instruments, dance and ecstatic fits. Everyone is a real participant in the service.

On/



On the one hand, these expressions make strong contrasts with the solemn approach of the orthodox churches, where much of the vocal ritual rests on the officiating clergy. On the other hand, they compare creditably with religious festivals in the African sense. The African is no mere passive observer in a religious festival. He participates without stint. Here again, then, the independent churches offer attractions that are wanting in the orthodox churches. In outward practice, the pagan convert to the independent church does not suffer a sharp break between the old and the new.

(e) Polygyny: In regard to the marital status of members of these churches, (with the exception of the A.R.S.) emphasis is placed on monogamy, though in practice, considerable latitude is evident. In this respect they are not much different from the orthodox churches; but the 'falling from grace' which so manifestly characterizes the polygynist in the orthodox church is less evident.

The A.R.S. has a clear policy for polygyny. The Prophet himself is polygynous and members enjoy a similar privilege; but there is the proviso that indiscriminate polygyny shall not be tolerated. Successive additions to polygynous unions must first obtain the sanction of a committee on marriage.

It seems to me that the phenomenal progress of the A.R.S. is partly to be credited to its relatively flexible marital policy. In less than twenty years it has risen almost to the status of a mission church. Quite a few of the relapsed members of other churches who gain admission to the A.R.S., include polygynists who are dissatisfied with their "nominal" membership status./

status.

In this section, we have noted a certain affinity between Independent Church ritual and indigenous belief and practice. Prayer-healing, visions, 'speaking with tongues' and the relatively free expression in participant ritual, all have their African counter-parts in religious belief and practice.

At the time of field-study, the Independent Churches seemed relatively young and inexperienced in church organization. With the exception of the better organized A.R.S., membership of the churches was preponderantly female and illiterate. In some of the churches, illiterate women held the reins of office. Literates seemed ashamed to identify themselves openly with the churches, unless they held office. Educational activity was almost nil. This was partly due to the negative attitude of leaders to education as being an adjunct of Christianity, and partly to the unwillingness of the Ministry of Education to approve faith-healing schools.

In spite of present inadequacies, the rising trend of membership and the continual recruitment of members from the orthodox churches suggest that the Independent Churches are potential, if not present, rivals to the orthodox churches. We have noted the largely intransigent, uncompromising attitude of the orthodox churches on the one hand, and on the other the relatively flexible approach of the Independent Churches. The latter more nearly approximate the indigenous religious belief and practice than the former. Consequently, the pagan who/

who joins the Independent Church is more readily assimilated; a change in religious allegiance does not call for a sharp break between the old and new.

In the Independent Churches, therefore, one sees the course of future developments in both the indigenous cults and the foreign Christian religion. With modifications, both may survive by means of symbiotic association.

(3)

Education (Christian) in Relation  
to Indigenous Religious Beliefs

Throughout our consideration of the contemporary scene, we have made passing references to the role of the educated in relation to the indigenous cults, our expectations and observation of behaviour. Anlo Education, we have maintained, is not to be divorced from Christianity. An educated man is, in principle, a Christian. A Christian, we have observed, is not always indifferent to his indigenous religion. If our reasoning holds good, this would equally apply to the educated man. In this section we examine more specifically the attitude of the educated in relation to the indigenous religious beliefs.

By 'education' we mean more than ordinary literacy. We exclude adult mass education which is aimed at the ability to read and write. For our purpose, we shall consider educated one who has completed a Middle School course and holds a certificate to that effect.<sup>(1)</sup> Thus our designation includes all/

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1. The completion of Middle School presupposes at least ten years of elementary school training. See also Chapter VII.

all teachers in the community, the store-keepers of the main commercial houses and their assistants, some of the petty-traders, the majority of the hospital staff, the clerical employees of the Government Agent's office, all civil servants (excluding labourers of the Public Works Department), constables (i.e. "General Police"), clerical employees of the Local Councils, some of the craftsmen, secondary school scholars, ministers of religion.

For various reasons, including the advantage of securing a statistically valid number of respondents, I decided to investigate the category of secondary school scholars. I chose the Zion College of West Africa, the older and larger of the two secondary schools of the Anlo State, and examined them by questionnaire involving open-end and poll-type questions. With the exception of the Fifth Formers who were busy with their School Certificate examination at the time, the whole school was involved (excluding, of course, the class absentees of the day). Every precaution was taken to ensure veracity in answers, as, for example, dissuading students from entering their names or revealing their identities. There was a follow-up through informal discussions. The following is a statistical representation of the results:

INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL SCHOLARS AT KETA.

A.

SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS.

Class	Total Respondents	Age Range		Religious Status of Respondent		Religious Status of Respondent's Parents.			Occupation of Respondent's Parent.	
		Mean		Pagan	Christian	Pagan Only One	Both	Christian	Clerical	Non-Clerical
1st Year	50	15-19	18	-	50	7	3	40	31	19
2nd Year	39	16-20	17	1	38	7	6	26	16	23
3rd Year	30	17-22	19	-	30	3	4	23	12	18
4th Year	45	17-22	20	-	45	8	5	32	19	26

INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL SCHOLARS AT KETA. (1)

B.

ATTITUDES REGARDING GHOSTS, WITCHES, MEDICINE, etc.

Class	Resp'ts	Belief in Ghosts			Belief in Witches			Native Medicine v. European or Modern Medicine.			The Trowo			Consulting Ritual Specialists.	
		Ghosts are real.			Witches are real			Native Medic. more efficacious	Modern Medic. more efficacious	No diff'ence	Real	Some Only Real	Only Super-stltn.	Ever Consulted	Never Consulted.
		No Exp.	Pers. Exp.	Only Super-stltn.	No Exp.	Exp.	Only Super-stltn.								
1st Year	50	22	13	15	25	14	11	6	36	8	4	34	12	14	36
2nd Year	39	16	7	16	15	18	6	7	16	16	3	30	6	15	24
3rd Year	30	8	10	12	14	12	4	6	13	11	-	28	2	13	17
4th Year	45	21	7	17	23	14	8	5	23	17	3	38	4	14	31



With the exception of one, all the 164 respondents are Christian,<sup>(1)</sup> their ages ranging from 15 to 22. A large percentage of respondents' parents is also Christian. About 48% of these are engaged in clerical employment.

On the question of belief in ghosts, only 37% think it superstitious. It is significant that of the large percentage of 'believers', less than 33% have actually had the experience of seeing ghosts for themselves. Belief in witchcraft is similarly remarkable. Only about 16% disbelieve in the reality of witches, and about 43% of believers claim personal experience. Asked to assess from personal experience the relative efficacy of indigenous medicine and modern medicine (i.e. patent medicines as well as medicines in hospitals and clinics), 15% feel that the indigenous medicine is more efficacious; 55% hold contrary views; 30% would rate both medicines alike. On the question of belief in the nature spirits (trowo), only 6% have firm belief in the reality of the tro concept; 77% believe that only some of the nature spirits are real, while 17% think the whole concept superstitious. Regarding participation or relations with ritual specialists, 34% have ever consulted ritual specialists on personal matters such as reclaiming lost property, in sickness and acquiring intelligence at school.

The follow-up informal discussions have largely confirmed/

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1. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to ascertain the "reality" of the Christian status of students. The only criterion of Christian status considered is baptism and confirmation. Whether students profess Christianity and also belong to indigenous cults is not known.

confirmed the above findings, although students seem somewhat reticent about participation in community ritual.

The results may not fully reflect the depth of education in the community,<sup>(1)</sup> especially when the opinion is held that Western education must necessarily counteract indigenous religious notions. Now having examined the issues, and taking into account the earlier references to the educated, the following conclusions may be drawn:

(i) Though an educated man jealously guards his new status position with pride and may refrain from open association with a ritual specialist, he is not entirely above indigenous religious belief and practice.

(ii) Belief in witchcraft or the supernatural infliction of pain still has a hold on him.

(iii) The social environment has a remarkable effect on his attitude to indigenous religious beliefs.

(iv) It takes a fairly high standard of education or education of a scientific nature to impress a man with the fact that ghosts and witches are figments or mental creations not susceptible to examination in the scientific sense.

(v) The effect of Western education on the indigenous religion is not different from money economy disrupting social relations.

In this chapter, we have attempted to show, primarily within a cultural context:

(i)/

1. In the Transition Period (Chapter VII) we noted 189 primary and middle schools, 871 teachers, an enrolment of 25,399 pupils, in addition to two secondary schools with an enrolment of about 400 students and about 25 teachers.

(i) That the church is a form of religious adaptation to modern circumstances.

(ii) That in both the Orthodox and the Independent Apostolic Churches, the new religious institutions are adapted to the fulfilment of traditional religious objectives.

(iii) That the educated Christian is not entirely indifferent to his indigenous religious belief and practice.

CHAPTER XICONCLUSIONS

The problem set for this thesis was to examine those changes overtaking Anlo indigenous religious institutions as a result of the impinging influence of Western European institutions. It is convenient at this stage to take a broad retrospective view of the ground thus far traversed.

Our study has led us through both the 'degenerative' and 'regenerative' phases of indigenous religion. In the traditional background we have found the social structure buttressed by the religious system, the core of which is "animism", or the worship of nature spirits and ancestral beings. In ancestral worship, the dead ancestors in the spiritual world are conceived as leading a life similar to that of the world of reality (kodzogbe). Like the lineage-head, the most senior member of the lineage looking after the interests of the lineage as a whole, the ancestors, as the oldest members of the lineage, look after the welfare of all their living descendants. The living descendants, in turn, are expected to behave in conformity with the norms of the lineage (or the clan) and to make regular or periodic offerings as the ancestors may require. Negligence is punished by the ancestors. The ancestral cult group also coincides with the lineage tro cult group where members of the lineage collectively acknowledge a nature deity. Thus in either case/

case, the cult coincides with the lineage and reinforces group unity.

Beyond the kinship level social units similarly coincide with cult groups. The ward, for example, is also a ward tro cult group where members of a territorial political unit co-operate on the basis of common residence to acknowledge a common deity, observe common taboos and collectively participate in ritual. This kind of religio-political organisation extends through the village to the State level, where the Paramount Chief serves both as political head and priest. Religious worship is thus an expression of the unity of the kinship group and of the local community. Along with the "animistic" concept is belief in supersensible powers expressing itself in a complex of practices of "magical" sort, serving both good and evil purposes.

<sup>Tats</sup> In such a religious organisation, <sup>exists in an</sup> the economy, <sup>which</sup> is largely <sup>at the</sup> subsistence <sup>level</sup>. Each lineage, the basic unit of social organisation, is almost entirely self-sufficient. Division of labour or specialisation is negligible. Recruitment of additional labour, beyond the members of the lineage is by communal labour or mutual aid.

With the introduction of a money economy and the development of new material wants and needs a new value system has been created to supplant or add to the old. A money economy has introduced the sale of labour and bids fair to eliminate mutual-aid/

mutual-aid altogether. It has led to migrant labour and therefore periodic exodus from the lineage roof. This has a relatively disruptive effect on lineage solidarity. As already indicated, money in the hands of individuals carries with it a certain freedom of action which gradually undermines the authority of the lineage-head. A status position formerly achieved entirely by age or seniority may now be achieved by seniority and by wealth.

Like money, other factors of change inspire incentives that lead to the relative disorganisation of the traditional structure. With money, a man obtains a European kind of education which leads to the acquisition of "various Western habits of thought and a taste for certain Western things, including food, clothing, and housing which can be obtained only through the possession of money".<sup>(1)</sup> Education thus encourages the acquisition and expenditure of money which further alienates the member of the lineage. The education may have been acquired from a mission school to whom education is but a means to the full and effective assimilation of the Christian faith. But then the explicit objective of Christianity is the replacement of the indigenous forms of worship. Education and Christianity evidently contribute to the social disorganisation set in motion by the monetary drives. Finally, there is the new political system in which the new economy operates. By this new system the old sanctions elaborately buttressed by religious beliefs are/

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1. Little, "From Tribalism to Modern Society", Year Book of Education, 1954.



are discarded or superseded by new legal sanctions. By indirect rule, the authority of the chief is strengthened; but he loses some of his former functions, including the full exercise of his former role as an ex-officio priest.

These economic and social changes are directly or indirectly reflected in the religious organisation of the contemporary scene. Instead of a single category of religious belief, a four-fold category has been developed after the modern spirit of individualism, independence of action, freedom of association. On the traditional level, some of the old cults have disintegrated completely or partially; on others have had new values or modified ritual superimposed upon them in correspondence with the change in attitude and values; belief in Mawu has been preserved and given new expressions; new ideals have crept into the generally malleable private cults; the principles of ancestral worship have been largely maintained, especially in areas where relatively few economic and social changes undermine the indigenous social structure, though ritual may be clothed differently; indigenous medicine supplements modern medicine and performs new roles peculiar to the contemporary situation; while some of the supernatural sanctions have been superseded by purely legal sanctions, belief in supernatural power to affect for good and evil largely remains the mainstay of sanctions.

Beyond the indigenous traditional cults which still largely/

largely recruit membership from the kinship group and the local community, new religious groups of a purely voluntary nature are developing to supplement and to displace the traditional cult groups. These are the atike cults and the Christian churches in their orthodox and independent forms. The former (atike cults) introduced from neighbouring tribal communities seek adaptation to some of the psycho-social problems created by the impact of the factors of change discussed above. They also seek to meet old problems in a modern way. We see in the atike cults, therefore, a form of religious adaptation to a new situation.

In a sociological sense, the Christian church as well - at least in its African form - may be seen as a form of adaptation. Membership of this group is entirely voluntary and cuts across the kin group and the local community. In a relatively heterogenous population, membership may transcend tribal affiliation. It has its own moral code by which members are guided. The church may thus weld into one homogenous unit people of vastly different backgrounds. In spite of differences in the policies of denominations, there is common effort, at least on the part of the membership, to contain some of the traditional values within the new organisation and thus harmonise aspects of the old with the changing world by finding for them new expressions. Seen in this light, the church is more like a product of change than a factor of change. It has the features of the modern voluntary association which, according to Dr. Little, is/

is fast becoming the focus of anthropological studies in "social change". He thus clarifies the problem: ✓ "Problems of 'culture contact' are best appreciated in terms of the resulting institutions rather than in terms of the cultures or social systems held to be impinging upon each other. The problem is not what is Western or what is 'native' or 'indigenous' but rather what is relevant in terms of social groupings and relationships".<sup>(1)</sup> The problem of the West Africanist, he emphasises, is "to find his social reality in contemporary form".<sup>(2)</sup> This leads us to a discussion of the church as an association.

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#### The Church as an Association

In the last chapter, we investigated the church primarily as a factor of change vis-à-vis the indigenous religious system. In this section we take a second look from the association standpoint. Our problem is this: to what extent is Christianity as an association taking over the principal activities of community life? This involves a discussion of the organisation and social life of the church.

The raison d'être of every Christian denomination is, of course, the propagation of the gospel, the bringing of Christianity to the African, conversion to the Christian faith. But/

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1. Ibid.
  2. Little, "The Studies of Social Change in British West Africa", Africa, Vol. XXIII pp. 274-284.

But it is also the means of acquiring formal education, of rearing and training children. By this, the church has become one of the foremost interpreters of Western ideals and values to the African. In more intimate terms, however, the functions of the church transcend formal education and worship. Aside from its *raison d'etre*, each church in Anlo like any other in West Africa, is "a centre of social life in the community, providing a field of activity in which (members) could acquire status and exercise leadership."<sup>(1)</sup>

At the head of each church in the community, whether orthodox or independent Apostolic, is a priest or catechist. In the Roman Catholic Church, such a priest will be appointed by the resident Bishop (at Dzelukofe), and in each parish or church community there is a committee of six to ten male and female members who advise the priest and work under him. In a properly constituted parish where there is a resident minister such a committee is known as Parish Advisory Board. Members of the committee are appointed by the Bishop at Dzelukofe on recommendation of the minister-in-charge who, in his turn, sounds community public opinion for likely candidates. Members of the Committee must be Catholics outstanding in their Christian way of life, and people who by their influence look after and promote Catholic interests, whether secular or religious. Their functions include assisting the Parish Minister in providing the finances/

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1. A.T. Porter, "Religious Affiliations in Freetown", Sierra Leone, Africa, Vol.23 (1953) p.7.

finances for the minister's maintenance, the current expenses of the Parish, buildings, improvements and extensions. Thus even though the Clergymen in charge are foreigners - mostly Dutch - the local members of the church have opportunities of rising to positions of responsibility next to the European priest.

Obviously, these are status positions; in the absence of a resident pastor, a member of the committee steps into his shoes, even if <sup>only</sup> temporarily. A comparable organisation obtains in the Protestant churches; but in lieu of foreign pastors appointed by a resident foreign Bishop who in turn is appointed by a Roman Pope, there are local clergymen who may be former catechists and head-teachers of churches and church schools.

The pastor of the church, whether Protestant or Catholic, has certain obligations to the membership, besides Sunday services. With or without select members of the Church, he makes pastoral visitation during the week-days especially to the homes of sick members. He is a comforter in sickness and bereavement. Where the situation warrants it, he may use Church funds to provide for the needy and destitute members. One of his most important functions is attendance to the domestic problems of members. Pastors at Keta are often rated more by their performance at these (extra-religious) functions than by their preaching ability. To this end, he is expected to be a Counsellor in matters relating to family dislocations or breaches of/

of marital fidelity. An effort will be made to settle lineage differences in the traditional way (i.e. by lineage arbitration); if a satisfactory solution is not found, probably because the arbitrator does not command the respect of all concerned, the pastor will certainly be the next resort. In more serious differences among non-kin members of the Church, say a member seducing another's wife, it is considered unchristian, and therefore reprehensible, for the aggrieved to seek legal redress without first obtaining the advice of his pastor in the matter. A 'good pastor' thus finds himself settling the domestic problems of his members and uniting them into one large integrated unit. He is the hub of the social life of the Christian community. More often than not, he commands the respect of members of other churches in the community as well. Unless he has alienated the pagan elements in a particular sense, they too will give due deference to his status.

Like the Roman Catholic Church, each Protestant Church has a number of "presbyters" (hamedada and hamefofo, lit. church mother and father) whose functions complement the paternal role of the pastor. Presbyters may be literate or illiterate. Essential qualifications for office seem to be unblemished reputation as a church member, age or experience within the church, and concern for its welfare. Hamedadawo and hamefowowo are nominated by the rank and file of the communicant membership and formally 'ordained' to their offices by the pastor of the church.

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The presbyterate is thus the highest aspiration of the lay membership - males and females, literates and illiterates. But the male literates may also rise to positions as catechists and pastors, if they so desire. Aside from these responsible offices, various committees formed from the membership are assigned responsibility for various departments of the church. There may be committees on finance, church school, Sunday schools, week-day services. In the last instance, opportunities are given to energetic, ambitious male members of the church to preach during week-day evenings, as in the Zion Church. These committees and offices give the church certain similarities with the lineage in which the lineage-head is assisted by the elderly, experienced members of the group.

In a wider sense opportunities for status and leadership are not restricted to elderly presbyters and committee men. There is usually a network of organisations in which the young people can play their role and be made to feel that they matter in the church. These organisations include choirs or singing bands, "youth fellowships", Christian "secret lodges", "Bible class" groups, benevolent societies, and among the Roman Catholic Churches, various other organisations under the patronage of one or other saint, the distinctively spiritual organisations of the "Holy Family", "Friends of the Poor Souls" (in purgatory) etc. Practically all of these organisations are entirely voluntary in the sense that membership is not obligatory, or members may withdraw when they so desire. They may also be expelled for misdemeanour/

misdemeanour, according to the constitution or the bye-laws of the organisation concerned. In some of the organisations members may be popularly recruited in a democratic sense; in others, power of admission is vested in the Secretary, the President or a committee on admission. What is relevant from our point of view is the particular sense in which these organisations provide for the ego satisfaction of individuals, and cater for the social adaptation of members to their communities. Each organisation has two or more offices of status which enable a holder of office - an "ordinary member" of the church - to develop a sense of his importance in his organisation and the church at large. Secondly, aside from its specific religious objective, each organisation performs extra-religious roles akin to the modern secular voluntary association. We shall discuss these two factors in terms of specific associations.

The "Bible Class" of the Presbyterian Church is an excellent specimen of orthodox church association in the Anlo State.<sup>(1)</sup> From each local congregation, a group is formed of all interested women, both literate and illiterate, young and old, communicants/

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1. The factual information on the "Bible Class" has been largely acquired from Rev. and Mrs. C.K. Dovlo to whom a written questionnaire had been submitted. Mrs. Dovlo is a leader of the Bible Class at Dzelukofe and a member of the Central Committee at Ho. The written information supplements the writer's own personal observation of the activities of the group at Dzelukofe.

communicants and non-communicants.<sup>(1)</sup> Local groups are linked into District Groups and the District Groups into Presbytery Groups. The four Presbytery Groups of the E.P. Church have their headquarters at Ho where the affairs of the association are dealt with by a Central Committee comprising delegates of the four Presbyteries. Thus an officer from the local level may become the representative of her group at the District level; she has prospects of nomination to the Presbytery level and from there to the Central Committee at Ho. Appointment to office on the local level is then a matter of great prestige. It may be the means of representing one's church at the highest level. Now let us examine more closely organisation on the local level. At Dzelukofe, membership of the Class is about 45. It is open to all baptised women of the congregation. Application for membership is usually through the leader of the group who later introduces the applicant to the whole class, if accepted. The officers who are popularly elected by the whole class include the President or the Class Leader, Class Secretary and Class Treasurer. All officers are literate and full communicants of the Church. Among the rank and file, full communicants, literate or illiterate, may qualify for a "badge", a crest of merit.

All in all, we have in the church an elaborate association/

1. Men and children are not admitted. The fact of the exclusion of men goes back to the history of the founding of the association. The group was started by Mrs. Isa Beveridge, wife of the Rev. W.M. Beveridge, a former principal of Amedzofe Teachers' Training College. She began by collecting around herself interested teachers' wives and leading Christian women of the local congregation, where she and her husband were working as (foreign) missionaries. She taught the group Bible reading and discussion, sewing and knitting. Later, the idea that such a group could be founded in every congregation where a leader could be found to organise it, materialised.

association in which there are immense opportunities for social mobility, status and leadership. With such associations, no youth need feel that he or she has to put up with an inferior status until a later age when he or she is qualified for the "presbytery". The various associations encourage full and satisfying participation in the life of the church. They bring the church to the level of all and sundry, and generate that feeling of belonging so necessary for the survival and maintenance of a cohesive group. Like the tribal associations organised in the urban centres, the church association "provides (almost) the same expression of the persistence of the strong feelings of loyalty and obligation to the kinship group and the town or village where the lineage is localised."<sup>(1)</sup>

The associations fulfil the needs of members in another sense. They (associations) are geared to the social needs of members, in the manner in which the Pastor fulfils roles of a minister and the father of a lineage. The Zion Youth Fellowship at Keta (Zion Church), for example fulfils roles that lead to the adaptation of members to the modern community. Of course, it has as its objective the Christian nurture of the youth (or the younger members of the church) and a better appreciation of the Bible. But in actual fact, its functions are those of a "civilising" agency within the church and the community. There is a weekly meeting of members. The first few minutes of this meeting are not unlike the programme of a secular club or association/

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1. Little, op.cit.

association: minutes are read and adopted, matters relating to the good of the Fellowship are discussed. Then members relax, as they listen to a lecture from an invited guest. The lecture may be on any subject and may relate to Religion, Psychology, Philosophy, Hygiene and Physiology, Geography.<sup>(1)</sup> Lecturers include the well-informed members of the community. A lecture is followed by a lively exchange of ideas, when members fall to a lively discussion on the subject of the lecture, with all the seriousness of an academic discussion group. Discussion, like lectures, may be in both English and the vernacular. On the purely social, convivial side, picnics and tea-parties break the tediousness of meetings and lectures. Functions within the church include performances of a social character, such as stage cantatas or (musical) operas, nativity plays. These are interesting diversions from the purely religious life of the church; they also serve as a means of raising funds for the church. Such programmes are very popular and attract all sections of the community. A member, unofficially sums up the objects of the Fellowship thus: "We aim to make the Zion Church a most enlightened organisation in the community". Of course, he means enlightening the members of the church in a modern sense.

In the "Bible Class" of the Presbyterian Church, members visit/

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1. The writer had the honour of being invited on two different occasions to lecture to this association, during the period of field study. His subjects, chosen on prompting from the members of the group, were "Leadership" and "The Races of Mankind". The subjects reflect the wide range of interest.

visit sick and bereaved friends to sing religious songs and to read the Bible to them. Special donations in cash are given to bereaved members when they are visited by the whole group. In this role, the "Bible Class" has the semblance of the mutual aid or benefit societies so very well known in various parts of West Africa.<sup>(1)</sup> According to information from the leader of the "class" at Dzelukofe, domestic problems of members are dealt with by the leader in her official and unofficial capacity. In certain cases all the officers meet to help individuals. We see in these examples, the integration of welfare services into the more religious aims of the association.

In the Roman Catholic Church, the secret lodges are particularly striking in performing this dual role of upholding church ideals and contributing to the social adaptation of members. These are the Orders of Knighthood, the Knights of Marshall and the Knights of St. John. The first was founded by a British Catholic in Nigeria; the last has been an integral part of the Roman Catholic Church from the middle ages, its functions being broadly similar to those of the knights of the Crusades. Their immediate purpose in each congregation is to group together prominent Catholic gentlemen and to give them an association similar in structure to the "Odd Fellows" and "Masonic" Lodges which are forbidden to Roman Catholics. As in any secret lodge, initiation/

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1. See Little, "The Role of Voluntary Associations in West African Urbanisation", American Anthropologist, Vol.59, No.4. (1957) pp.579-596.



initiation is a matter of secrecy, performed at night behind closed doors. The *raison d'être* of the lodges is to uphold Catholic ideals in every aspect of social life: in marriage, education, business, politics, customary laws, etc. But their greatest practical asset from the individual member's standpoint lies in mutual help in time of sickness, in business, career-finding and the various departments of life in which a brother needs a brother's help. Within the church itself orders may function in special festive Church ceremonies as escorts and guards of honour. (1)

The numerous independent Apostolic churches are equally fertile in the development of associations although for the sake of simplicity and conciseness we have drawn examples from the orthodox churches. However, we cannot fail to mention the Apostolic Revelation Society which is developing community life to an extent unknown to orthodox churches. At Tadzewu, the headquarters of the church, members almost exclusively inhabit a particular ward or wards of the village and lead some sort of communal life centring around the Prophet. There is a clinic and a school providing for the health and education of members, although in principle these are open to non-members as well. The society has its own farms, where food-crops and animals are raised, its own artisans, most of whom are former patients of the Prophet/

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1. The corresponding Protestant Lodge is the "Orange". This is one of the popular lodges at Keta, but its activities are almost entirely secular and social and hence it cannot conveniently be classified as a church association.

Prophet - these have found a home in the Church and are reluctant to leave. In the A.R.S. at Tadzewu one sees a closely integrated community very similar to the traditional homogeneous lineage.

Thus far we have dealt with associations within specific churches or denominations. But the fissiparous tendencies of the Christian church are as much deplored in Africa as in Euro-America. It is noteworthy that in Anlo local initiative is making efforts to bridge the gap between faiths and sects. The effort is reflected in the development of Christian associations cutting across religious denominations. Of these (associations), the Young Women's Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.) is one of the most significant. As in our earlier discussions, we shall examine the Y.W.C.A. as a whole with specific regard to its role as a factor of prestige and as an adaptive mechanism.<sup>(1)</sup>

The association at Keta is a branch of the parent organisation at Accra, which is an affiliate of the World Y.W.C.A. Membership is open to girls and women, married or single. There are about 70 members including 23 teenagers, 30 illiterates. There are three kinds of individual membership: (a) Full membership which is open to all women and girls of 18 or more years of age who have studied the basis and purpose of the association and are prepared to sign the following declaration: "In joining the worldwide fellowship of the Y.W.C.A., I declare my faith in our Lord Jesus/

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1. The factual material on the Y.W.C.A. was acquired from Mrs. Frieda Degbor, an officer of the local branch (Keta) to whom a written questionnaire was submitted.

Jesus Christ, and my desire to serve others in His Spirit of Love".

(b) Associate Membership: open to all girls and women of 16 or more years of age who are in sympathy with the purpose of the Y.W.C.A., and desire to share in its activities as non-voting members. (c) Junior Membership: open to girls between the ages of 12 and 16 who wish to share in its fellowship and take part in its activities. A girl or a woman who is 16 or more years of age may become an Associate member, i.e. a non-voting member. Pagans and Mohammedans remain associate members.

Now the division of the association into categories of membership and the arrangement of programmes to fit categories of literacy, illiteracy and teenager, implies the creation of a number of offices and the sharing of responsibilities. Almost everyone of the 70 members has, directly or indirectly, some kind of responsibility which contributes to her importance in the group. Each local officer has the prospect of serving on the national level. Elected to represent the local branch at Accra, a woman might find herself eventually representing the national chapter on a world level, in Europe, Asia, America. The very fact of association with a world organisation is by itself of incalculable prestige value. Thus, Christian women, especially literates with the ambition to acquire prestige in the modern way, or achieve status as leaders in their community find the Y.W.C.A. a helpful organisation.

But the Y.W.C.A. achieves more than creating avenues for leadership and prestige. Like the denominational organisations we have dealt with, it performs more positive roles in the integration/

integration of members into their social environment, roles which transcend the immediate religious objectives. The purpose of the association is given to be "to bring women and girls of different Christian traditions into a world wide fellowship, participating in the life and worship of their church and expressing their faith by word or deed." True to the church ideal, the weekly meetings include biblical discussions. But equally important on such occasions are lessons on hair-dressing, housecraft, as well as debates, singing and games, lectures and dancing practice. Perhaps it is best to describe the association as a school in which members learn to take their place as useful citizens of their community, by acquiring domestic training, the lessons of life and the social graces. Equally important is the group feeling generated among members. Each learns to feel for the other. This is given expression particularly in group sympathy in the event of bereavement. Members attend the funerals of fellow members in a body and make donations to bereaved members. As a source of enlightenment in the community, the association organises public lectures, dances, music nights, radio broadcasting for the education of the general public. Members also serve on College boards, local education committees, and are active in the local branches of the Red Cross and Ghana Women's Federation. The senior members of the association are especially helpful to girls and young women in the critical periods of life.

By these services, Christians and literates of the community/

community learn to adapt themselves to the modern environment of a money economy, education and Christianity. A pagan moving out of the traditional cult into the Christian world, finds here a means of adapting herself to the new circumstances.

We have demonstrated, in this section, how the church is taking over some of the principal activities of community life. If we add the roles of the church as an educator, offering formal training to the young at school, as a dispenser of medicines (in certain cases), we can see in the church the traditional polyvalent cult group in which all the social and spiritual needs of members are provided. It offers status and prestige to its "ritual specialists", opportunities for social mobility to the rank and file of the "cult" membership, and above all, inspires sentiments of "cult" unity and solidarity.

In its purely cultural context, orthodox Christianity has been found to be the direct antithesis of the indigenous religion. Christianity makes no secret of displacing the indigenous religion and culture. From the purely sociological standpoint, however, we have found that both religions have some common ground, as indicated in the development of associations within the church. Aside from the purely scientific treatment of our subject, we might perhaps put in a word of social engineering. It seems to me that if Christianity in a non-literate society is to attain its objective with minimum disruption of the society, it will be necessary to give greater emphasis to the social development of the church than to a tenacious, uncompromising adherence to a set of dogmata which from the pagan's point/

point of view are inhospitable. Perhaps Lucy Mair had this point in mind when she writes of the need for a scientific teaching of religion.<sup>(1)</sup>

(2)

### Final Observations

It has been shown in this thesis:

(i) That the Anlo traditional cults served the social needs of the people. The cult group, as a unit of social organisation performed a number of social functions. By the worship of a common deity, the observance of common taboos, the acknowledgment of a common ritual head, the cult group reinforced lineage and local group solidarity. It was also a unit of economic co-operation. By effectively buttressing the social structure, the religious system aided the survival of the social unit.

(ii) That the introduction of a money economy, new political system, Christianity and education has led to a change in the traditional system. Money has introduced the sale of labour and "economic migration"; it has developed new material wants and needs, freedom of action and individualism. The unit of economic co-operation is no longer entirely based on the lineage and the local community. Education and Christianity alienate (make alien) the member of the lineage, while the new political system weakens or eliminates the traditional sanctions and secularizes the chief's office. These innovations have a marked effect/

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1. See An African People in the Twentieth Century, London, 1934.



effect on the socio-economic structure which in turn undermines the unity of the kin group and the local community for ritual or religious observances.

(iii) That new forms of religion have emerged as adaptations to the new situation. These include cults modified in ritual in order to adapt them to modern circumstances; a variety of non-indigenous cults offering release from some of the psycho-social problems of the new situation; Christianity in its orthodox and independent church forms. An important feature in the growth of modern religious adaptations is the trend towards associational organization.

It has been suggested in the concluding portions of the previous section that the kind of social adaptation involved in the associational organization of the church is a phenomenon worth the consideration of missionaries and church leaders interested in an orderly evolution of the society in which the church seeks to thrive. Religious organization must be seen as an expression of the social structure. By way of conclusion, it is convenient at this stage to take a closer examination of the relationship between religious organization and social structure (or existing social trend).

The position we have adopted in the present study is that religion, as an expression of the social structure, is malleable, plastic, capable of modification to meet individual and group circumstances.<sup>(1)</sup>

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1. See Firth, Elements of Social Organization, Chapter VII.

religion changes correspondingly.

In our traditional background we found the social structure rigidly buttressed by the religious system. The lineage and the local community, as the basic units of social organization also represented the effective functioning cult groups. With the advent of a money economy and its effect on lineage and local group solidarity, new forms of religious organization began to emerge in response to the changes in the social structure. In the voluntary associational organization, kinship and common residence do not necessarily provide the structure of the organization. The new religious adaptations express this kind of emergent social structure. The voluntary association is a modern <sup>substitute for?</sup> expression of the weakening traditional lineage. Again, this is equally expressed in the modern religious adaptation which is, in effect, syncretic, a blend of traditional and modern religious phenomena, to wit: Christianity being conditioned to local circumstances, modern atike cults making overtures to Christianity and traditional cults undergoing ritual modification to fit them for modern circumstances.

The implications of this correspondence are that the existing religious reintegrations must be seen in relation to the social and economic changes that are transforming most African communities today. The future of the indigenous religion will depend upon the extent of this kind of socio-economic transformation. In other words, religious development is a function/

function of the industrialization, specialization, urbanization that are fast becoming features of the modern African community. In the modern Ghana with her potentialities for industrialization, it is to be expected that the voluntary religious association will become marked as a principle of socio-religious organization.

Finally, as this implies, it may be pointed out that many of our theoretical observations in respect of the Anlo might equally apply to the wider linguistic Ewe-speaking group, and possibly to Ghana as a whole. It is for the greater accuracy of observation that we have found it necessary, in the scientific spirit, to concentrate on a smaller unit. Such a procedure is even more imperative in an attempt at "describing and analysing the multifarious social changes and the transformations of beliefs and morals" which Professor Forde describes as a "complex task".<sup>(1)</sup> It is hoped then that the present study will constitute the preliminary to a study on a wider comparative basis.

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1. African Worlds, p. xvii.

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